



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 140 • NUMBER 032 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 25, 2004

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

All parliamentary publications are available on the
"Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire" at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 25, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (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 response to eight petitions.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

HEALTH

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise and present a petition on behalf of numerous families in my riding of South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale. The petitioners ask Parliament to amend the Canada Health Act to include, as medically necessary, therapy for children suffering from autism. They also ask Parliament to contribute to the creation of academic chairs at Canadian universities dedicated to the research and treatment of autism.

CANADIAN FORCES

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise yet again to present another petition from the citizens of Canada, citizens from Bradford, Newmarket, Aurora and Gilford in Ontario.

As with other petitions that I have presented on this subject, the petitioners wish to draw to the attention of the House that the Canadian Forces Housing Agency does provide housing for some of our military families across Canada, that many of those homes are substandard to acceptable living conditions, and they also see their rent increased yearly.

Therefore, the petitioners from these Ontario communities call upon Parliament to immediately suspend any future rent increases for accommodations provided by the Canadian Forces Housing

Agency until such time as the Government of Canada makes substantive improvements to the living conditions of housing provided for our military families.

* * *

•(1010)

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe that you would find consent for the following motion. I move:

That at the conclusion of today's debate on the Conservative opposition motion, all questions necessary to dispose of this motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, November 30.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION — MIRABEL AIRPORT

Hon. Stephen Harper (Calgary Southwest, CPC) moved:

That the House call on the government to take the appropriate measures to sell the 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel Airport.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the issue to which we are drawing the attention of the House today will no doubt revive many bad memories for two generations of Quebecers. It should also be of concern to all Canadians.

Supply

[*English*]

The savage expropriation that took place north of Montreal 25 years ago in Mirabel is not only a Quebec issue. All Canadians, especially rural Canadians, Canadian farmers, understand that a person's home or land is a sacred refuge where families grow, where livelihoods are made, where dreams are pursued and where a sense of community is developed.

This was a massive injustice, an odious boondoggle, which effects continue to this day for thousands of people. This is a story that has been understood, at least in part, for some time across the country.

I believe today we will hear from the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country who was here in the 1970s. He spoke about the injustice and the boondoggle, on a scale never before seen, taking place in Mirabel. In the 1980s the hon. member for Niagara Falls, who I believe will speak later today, spoke about the attempts of the then Mulroney Conservative government to rectify this injustice.

The fact of the matter is that in some form, 30 years later this continues without full resolution.

[*Translation*]

The Mirabel wound has never been healed, the outrage has never been repaired and the error has never been recognized.

My intention today is not to re-open the debate unnecessarily, since it is still open; quite the opposite. The goal of our motion is to ensure that the Government of Canada puts an end once and for all to a saga that dishonours our country and our government and reason of state.

On March 27, 1960, the Liberal government announced the construction of what it called one of the largest airports in the world, which would greet 10 million passengers a year.

To implement this totally unrealistic project, the Liberal government expropriated close to 100,000 acres of the best farm land in Quebec. The area is equivalent to two thirds of Montreal island.

•(1015)

[*English*]

To put it in western terms, this is an area almost the size of the city of Calgary.

[*Translation*]

One hundred thousand acres is twenty times the area currently occupied by Mirabel, an airport that is nearly always empty. The worst thing is not that this was a government mistake, all governments can make mistakes from time to time. The problem in this saga is that the government made mistake after mistake, with no consideration whatsoever for the families that have been in the area for generations.

For more than 15 years, from 1969 to 1985, a merciless battle has been waged against the Mirabel families by contemptuous public servants implementing an arrogant policy. The psychological harassment and constant war of nerves waged with such vehemence have just about brought many to their wits' end.

Since 1969, the situation of Mirabel landowners, the farmers in particular, has been difficult, unjust, humiliating and painful, dramatic, even, at times, to an extent we have trouble imagining today.

[*English*]

I recently visited that area and met with the leader of the remaining people who had been expropriated, Mr. Marcel Denis. I met with people who had lost their homes and their land. I can tell hon. members that for them there has been no closure to this traumatic event and no resolution to the future of their economic lives.

[*Translation*]

There is no better illustration of that arrogance than the way the people were notified that they would be pushed out of their homes. Mr. Raymond, the leader of the Mirabel expropriates, has described the first hours of the bomb that was dropped on the people of Mirabel in 1969.

This is an excerpt from *La mémoire de Mirabel*:

When I learned of the expropriation, I started tried to find out if it was really true or just a false rumour. Radio and newspaper reports had indicated that the new airport would be built in the Sainte-Scholastique area. Minister Marchand made the first announcement on the radio on March 27, 1969, at 2 or 3 p.m. That is how we found out.

So that is how they learned about the expropriation, on the radio. No consideration was shown them, their children, their friends, the families themselves that were going to be put out of their houses, none for the communities or local businesses. Mr. Raymond's story is worth keeping in mind as evidence of the Liberal way of doing things.

Right from that very first day up to the latest speech by the current Minister of Transport, the tone has remained strikingly similar. There was no consideration whatsoever shown to the families and citizens.

There are stories besides that of Mr. Raymond that deserve to be told, as they are indicative of the Liberal way and the inhuman nature of this undertaking. In this respect, Mr. Cardinal's case is very telling. At the time of the expropriation, Mr. Cardinal was getting on in years. He lived in the little village called Mirabel.

The federal government had planned to open up a quarry to provide the stone to make the concrete for the runways. In its wisdom, the Liberal government decided to put this quarry right in the little village of Mirabel. The people living within a one-mile radius of the quarry were forced out of their homes and had to move out very quickly, whether or not they had agreed to the amount of the expropriation. Here is his story:

In that area of the town there were around 35 homes and some 20 farms. A total of 50 or so buildings had to be abandoned to make room for the planned quarry.

Having been ordered to leave, Mr. Cardinal bought land in Saint-Eustache and had a new house built. Unfortunately for him, work on his new house was stopped by a strike and he did not have the time to finish moving his belongings.

When he finally went back to his old house to retrieve the rest of his belongings, government agents had set the house on fire and burnt it to the ground with everything that was left of his household and personal belongings still inside. Again I quote the book:

A life worth of things had stupidly disappeared. Mr. Cardinal took out his handkerchief—the house held many memories—and started crying. They climbed back into the truck and, without a word, drove back to Saint-Eustache.

• (1020)

Today, we know that the federal government made a mistake. Real quarries were dug two or three miles further on. The lands the expropriated owners had been forced to abandon were sold. Mr. Cardinal should never have been expropriated, let alone forced to leave his home. That is another chapter in the Liberal story of Mirabel.

There are tens and even hundreds of examples of the turpitude of the Liberal government. More recently, even the present Prime Minister's predecessor said that he would not shed a tear if Mirabel were to be closed.

These lands were never used for the airport. These people want to recover their lands. Recently, dozens of farmers, members of the 11,000 acres committee, demonstrated to express their anger in Mirabel. They even said they were ready to buy their lands back, and they should.

Mirabel was a terrible mistake. The mistake was not only to break up an area many times larger than necessary, but to victimize thousands of Quebeckers, treating them unfairly, and to deprive this airport of the tools it would have needed to develop and secure the future.

Now that the airport is entirely closed to passenger traffic and will not expand in the foreseeable future, if ever, the expropriated land owners believe that the 11,000 acres of land outside the airport perimeter should be returned to farming again.

The Minister of Transport says that it is not possible. Yet it was possible for the Conservative Mulroney government to give back about 80% of the lands to the expropriated owners. There are only 11,000 acres left to give back. This should not be too much for the Liberal government to do.

• (1025)

[*English*]

The Liberals would like this issue to go away but it will not and it will not be forgotten.

I looked at the plans of Mirabel on a recent visit there. One really has to see the map of this semi-abandoned airport to understand the scale of this scandal, this boondoggle, this mismanagement involving 97,000 acres of land.

It was not as if the Liberals were building the largest airport in the world. Sitting there half empty, Mirabel is already one of the largest airports in the world. It was as if they were building a space station, as if they were sending people to another galaxy out of that facility.

This is a mess that has been created by the Liberals. It is a mess that a previous Conservative government did in its time make some attempt to fix. It is a mess that must be fixed by the Liberals.

[*Translation*]

I urge all members, including the Trudeauist Minister of Transport, who was a member of the Trudeau government during

Supply

the first phases of this saga, to support the resolution. It is not a matter of politics but rather a matter of goodwill and justice.

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech. As you undoubtedly know, I represent a riding that is close to Mirabel airport. Many of my constituents—

An hon. member: At the other end of the river.

Hon. Don Boudria: Whether or not the river unites us, it is nevertheless Mirabel's neighbouring riding that I have the honour and the privilege to represent. I must say that I totally disagree with what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, first, at the pleasure he took over the fiasco of the Mulroney government in the 1980s. In this regard, I believe he should at least have tried to remember the difficulties of Roch Lasalle in this issue. It was a terrible mess and a scandal in the House of Commons. If the hon. member has no recollection of it, he should read the papers of that time and everything else.

I am also having trouble understanding why the hon. member wants to do absolutely the opposite of what ADM is trying to do in this matter. He has unilaterally decided, apparently, that all plans for the future and submissions regarding plans for the future of the airport are worth nothing. He has decided that the land is surplus, in his opinion, without even knowing what the airport's future holds.

He seems to be painting a picture of some other place in Canada when he says there is nothing left of Mirabel. That is not true. The hon. leader of the opposition is mistaken. I think there is still a future for Mirabel; there is a future for my constituents who have worked there, those who are still working there, and those who will work there in the future. The hon. member says he is in favour of transparency. However, the public bids have not yet been opened and he is putting the whole procedure on trial.

The ADM, the body administering this, takes a position opposite to his. How does he justify taking the position he is taking today? What does the hon. member think of all the other things going on at the airport—the Bombardier factory there, the training facility just beside it, the air cargo that goes out of there, and all the rest?

Of course, we know that the current runways are sufficient to accommodate that. What is not known right now is what the future will be and what it will require in additional space; the land is there for that purpose. If such were not the case, why would ADM not want to get rid of it tomorrow? But it does not. ADM does not agree with the hon. member opposite.

I disagree completely with him regarding the future of this facility. What he is telling us is that he is against transparency, against the procedure, against ADM. He sees no future at all for this public facility.

As for me, as an MP from the Mirabel region, because that is what I am, I disagree profoundly with him. What I am going to do is to take lots of copies of his speech and distribute them to the constituents of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, especially those who live near Hawkesbury. I will invite him to come to town to debate the issue, after the speech he has just made.

Supply

•(1030)

Hon. Stephen Harper: Madam Speaker, I am glad to answer this question. For us, the issue is not the process of a government agency, but justice for all citizens of this region and for farmers.

[*English*]

I want all Canadians to understand this situation. The former minister talks about a bunch of issues that frankly, for the most part, are irrelevant to what is before us today.

The record is this. The Liberal government expropriated 97,000 acres, of which only 5,000 is being used today and, by the way, not being used completely, as we all know. Mirabel is the Liberal white elephant of history. Some day it will be in history books for future generations. Some day when we have interplanetary travel, it may be a story in other galaxies.

The previous Conservative government in its day returned some 81,000 acres and made provision for the expansion. The expansion of Mirabel has not occurred. What is before us today? The Minister of Transport should drop his Trudeauist blinders for a minute, forget about that era, and move into the 21st century.

In the last 15 or 20 years it has become apparent that the issue at Mirabel is the survival of the existing facility. It is not the expansion of the facility. That is not going to happen any time in my lifetime. The people who owned this land and are using it want it back so they can make productive investment. Quite frankly, the issue here is simple. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, the former minister, and the current minister, quite frankly, should just admit they were wrong. Drop the Liberal arrogance and get on with the solution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to commend the leader of the Conservative Party for his chronology of what happened at Mirabel. Obviously, the member understands very well the Liberal stand on this issue as well as the human tragedy that was caused by the Liberal Party.

Therefore, I would ask him to explain how he sees the land being returned to those who were expropriated and how he would see Parliament taking a decision as soon as possible. Indeed, it is high time that justice was done for those whose land was expropriated.

Hon. Stephen Harper: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member of the Bloc Québécois for his comments.

We hope that all members of this House will support this motion. We might not have support from the Liberals who, up to this day, continue to live in the arrogant Trudeau era. Nonetheless, I hope we will pass this motion.

It is the responsibility of the government to find a way to return the expropriated land. It is not an easy issue. ADM has its own view, but it is a creature of the government.

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Who signed the lease?

Hon. Stephen Harper: The minister talks about the lease. This lease includes the objective of encouraging passenger air traffic to

Mirabel. Obviously, this objective has so far not been reached. ADM has to be realistic and treat Canadians fairly in this case.

•(1035)

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the leader of the opposition how he can justify that it was a Conservative minister, Jean Corbeil, on behalf of the government of Brian Mulroney, who signed a lease for sixty years, that is to say until 2052, with ADM, a corporation established by that same Conservative government to foster the interests of both airports.

Is the opposition leader asking us to repudiate, to tear up a lease duly signed?

[*English*]

Hon. Stephen Harper: Madam Speaker, Mr. Mulroney and his government undertook the steps that were possible to take to rectify this problem in that era. They signed an agreement which the facts show has not been fulfilled and not upheld. I suggest, and I think the House is going to suggest, the minister look at renegotiating this. The grounds are there. Justice demands it. The minister refuses.

This particular minister must face facts and rectify this situation. This minister has accomplished a new record in Canadian politics. He has been a minister under Trudeau at the far centralist end, then under Turner at the far centralist end of the spectrum, and co-founder of the Bloc. Yet, through 20 years of his political career, in all these different incarnations, he still manages to be wrong all of the time.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to take part in this debate. Of course, this debate is being held for reasons of crass political opportunism, as everybody realizes that the leader of the official opposition is a member of the party that signed a 60-year lease, in 1992.

Indeed, it is the Progressive Conservative Party which handed over the administration of all its lands, of all its airports, to a not for profit corporation, ADM, with the mandate to do the best job possible in the development of its two airports. This deal was initialed and it has legal standing.

Therefore, when the Leader of the Opposition says that he is going to pay a short visit, to hop over to Mirabel, and he decides he will repudiate the signature of the Conservative minister, Jean Corbeil, as well as the commitments of that government, I think this is crass opportunism.

Worse yet, he tries to raise false hopes in the public that things will not go as planned, and he knows he will not be delivering the goods. This is why I believe that the Leader of the Opposition, who announced that he would make a little pact with the Bloc Québécois, wants to try to have the people in Mirabel believe that his party and the Bloc Québécois will be in the driver's seat in this file. However, he is totally wrong.

[*English*]

I am very surprised that the leader of the progressive party, sorry, not progressive. I withdraw those words.

The leader of that party announced that he is going to make a pact with the Bloc Québécois to renege on an agreement, a signed lease by Tory minister Jean Corbeil. It is just incredible. Those guys have no respect for the law.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Unlike the official opposition and the Bloc Québécois, we believe that Mirabel is an important airport for Montreal, Quebec and Canada. I am convinced that all options should be kept open. We absolutely must preserve the future.

This means that, in the meantime, we have to respect the authority in charge of managing this airport. It was the will of this Parliament to appoint a group known as ADM, or Aéroports de Montréal, to look after the future of the airport. It has been doing so since 1992, with a commitment until 2052. This agreement until 2052 was not signed by the Bloc Québécois or myself, but by the Conservatives. Later, they will have a little parade in Mirabel to look generous, when they are the ones who tied the government's hands with a 60-year lease. What hypocrisy.

I would like to put a more specific aspect of ADM's responsibilities into context. In 1988, 11,000 acres of airport reserve land, which were not being used for airport operation, were leased long term to local farmers. It is not true that the farmers do not live on their land. The fact of the matter is that 11,000 acres were leased to local farmers, and an agricultural renewal program was also offered to them.

Naturally, when the management of Mirabel airport was transferred to ADM, these leases were also transferred to ADM. That was part of the agreement. We are talking about 131 leases that the Conservative government at the time transferred to ADM. The fate of 131 farmers was put into the hands of ADM, not by the Liberals or the others, but by the Conservative government. These leases expire in 2010. Those concerned voluntarily signed leases expiring in 2010.

So, last year, when it reviewed its master plan, ADM looked at all this and proposed to extend the leases for an additional 13-year period. Many people are unaware of this, but there is currently an offer on the table to allow the people to continue living on these lands until November 2023.

There is no doubt that we want to protect the future. But at the same time, we want to respond to the immediate needs of these farmers. We are therefore convinced that this kind of long-term lease would help reduce uncertainty and foster development of these agricultural lands.

Unlike the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois, I am confident in Mirabel's future. I do not want to condemn Mirabel. In fact, Mirabel is more alive than ever. Here is what I think of the Conservative Party. We know that Mirabel is the ideal location to build the new Bombardier plant for the C series. We know what this party thinks of Bombardier and the aerospace industry. I think the Bloc Québécois is being drawn into a fools' pact. We know very well what the Conservative Party thinks of Bombardier and the development of the C series.

Supply

What I want to do is to create 2,500 jobs in Mirabel, thanks to the C series assembly plant. I do not understand why the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel does not realize that Mirabel's potential is extraordinary with the C series. Now is not the time to jeopardize the future of this airport. Now is not the time to give up and throw in the towel. I think we will create more jobs than ever in the Mirabel region. This is precisely what we want to do.

There is more: an extraordinary future is shaping up in the air cargo sector. Mirabel currently handles 110 tonnes of air cargo per year. I suppose that the leader of the Conservative Party would rather see this happening in Toronto or Calgary. Personally, I want to see it happening in Montreal, in Mirabel, and we want this volume to increase.

Since that airport can be in service 24 hours a day without disturbing the neighbourhood, without disturbing anyone, its potential is limitless in this regard. When I see that the Conservatives want to condemn Mirabel, I do not trust them, because their anti-Quebec tendency is well known. We have to be wary of all this sweet talking, because it is an illusion.

I want Mirabel to become a major industrial centre for the aviation sector. About 10 international companies are already there. I do not understand the Bloc Québécois. It wants to develop Mirabel, but at the same time it wants to deprive it of its assets. This is unbelievable. It looks like these people are advocating a scorched earth policy. They want to destroy everything. This is not what we want to do.

• (1045)

We have confidence in the future and we are convinced there will be a way to make Mirabel profitable. We are convinced there will be volume at Mirabel and there will be more jobs there than ever. We have confidence in Mirabel. We do not want to take a step back. We do not want to put the future at risk. We do want to put jobs at risk. However, that is what they are doing. They are trying to reopen old wounds out of sheer political opportunism, and it makes me sick.

For 30 years, year in year out, it has not been easy for these people, I agree. I would rather have 10 million, 20 million or 30 million passengers. However, that is not the case. We are realistic enough to come back and look at other options. As for the current number of jobs at Mirabel, it is absolutely extraordinary. In fact, four proposals have been submitted to ADM for the use of Mirabel's facilities. However, they know nothing about that.

The member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel knows nothing about this. He is prepared to put the future of Mirabel in danger without even considering the plans currently on the table at ADM. How irresponsible! I cannot believe it.

The transport critic asks, "what plans"? This just proves she knows nothing. She wants to condemn Mirabel without a thought to its future. ADM is responsible for development. They called for proposals and received eight, four of which require more detail. These proposals are currently on the table at ADM, in accordance with the ADM lease.

Supply

I do not understand the Bloc Québécois. They do not know what they are talking about and only want to gain cheap political points without even realizing that they are compromising the future of Mirabel and of job development in that region, which is totally irresponsible. I cannot believe it.

As for the proposals, the four bidders have until March 31, 2005, to present a detailed business case. Why would the Bloc Québécois not give a chance to the four bidders who want to participate in the economic development of the region and the development of this airport? Why are they shutting out the future? Unless they have inexplicable, or at least, unexplained, reasons. I look forward to hearing those.

There is one thing for certain: Mirabel's full potential has not been developed. We do, of course, have a responsibility to do everything in our power to make this absolutely extraordinary structure cost-effective. A few years down the road, I am sure that the members of this House who vote in favour of this motion will regret it bitterly. They will come to realize that we, with our confidence in the future of the new role of Mirabel, in the industrial future of Mirabel, will be proud of what we have accomplished.

This is the reason for our refusal to support such a short-sighted motion. The same members of the Bloc Québécois, the little buddies of the Conservatives, will be getting up shortly to vote in favour of the motion of the Conservatives, who want to have Mirabel as a hunting trophy, and then to develop elsewhere perhaps. These are the selfsame Conservative members who are opposed to assistance to Bombardier, yet the Bloc members will be backing them up on this one.

This will not hit them until tomorrow, or maybe today during Oral Questions, when they come asking for help for Bombardier to develop at Mirabel. They will be asking for subsidies for Bombardier to develop the C Series, so they will be voting out of both sides of their mouths. This is systematic hypocrisy.

•(1050)

I want to see Bombardier relocate to Mirabel to produce the C Series. I want those 2,500 jobs in Quebec. I want all our options kept open as far as the future of Mirabel is concerned, because it is going to be a significant pole of economic development, in the opinion of ADM. That is why we have four proposals on the table at the present time for the development of Mirabel and its present facilities.

So this is both ill-timed and sending a very wrong message. The people contemplating development are being sent the message that certain short-sighted members of this Parliament want to jeopardize their plans. In reaction to a little protest, they want to get back into people's favour. We have seen people like that before.

It is my impression that the Conservative Party's position is not based on principle, nor is it responsible. I cannot have any confidence in them as far as the future of Quebec is concerned. But the Bloc, of course—

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Not what we said.

Hon Jean Lapierre: The member for Longueuil has just said that they have confidence in the Conservatives as far as the future of Quebec is concerned. That I find surprising, extremely surprising.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Madam Speaker, I hear the Minister of Transport and his demagogic rhetoric, but we are used to that, because he always tries to stir up emotions.

But I do not want him to twist my words around and to read things into remarks I did not make. He said he could not trust the Conservatives to stand for Quebec's interests, and I reminded him that he used to trust the Bloc Québécois to do that.

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Madam Speaker, this is certainly not a point of order. They are getting so chummy now that they do not know anymore who stands for what.

I can tell you one thing. There are at the present time 22 air cargo companies in Mirabel, and there are between 10,000 and 13,000 flights annually. Contrary to what the Conservatives would have us believe and would like it to be, it is not a wasteland. One day, and perhaps sooner than we think, Quebec will have a strong development, thanks to facilities with a great potential.

If Bombardier is considering Mirabel, it is because there is an airport there. If it wants to build planes and do some testing there, it is thanks to the airport.

Basically, that is what my colleague is telling me. She does not understand. One does not have to be a rocket scientist to understand the intrinsic edge Mirabel has as a site for the Bombardier C Series which we want to develop in Canada.

Mirabel has a terrific edge. I do not understand why, today, when Bombardier is considering various sites, we should send the message that the party opposite wants to shrink Mirabel. The Conservative Party of Canada has always been eager to put a stranglehold on Mirabel. This is not new.

I do not understand why, at a time when there are four projects for the development of Mirabel as well as a huge \$2 billion project at Bombardier on ADM's drawing board in Ville Saint-Laurent, with, as the crow flies, an almost direct view on Mirabel airport, one would want to jeopardize all that.

The message this sends is that, if these people were in office, we could say goodbye to Mirabel. Instead of developing 2,500 jobs, they would rather grow corn. That does not jive, it does not work. I cannot get over their not wanting to give the process and the potential for development a chance.

I will gladly oppose this motion, because it shows these people's lack of vision, lack of ambition and lack of trust in the future of Mirabel.

Coming from the hon. member for Longueuil, I could understand; she may think that Mirabel is competing with the airport in Saint-Hubert. But the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel? I cannot get over it. He is shooting himself in the foot. How can he be against the development of Mirabel? That is beyond me.

One thing is clear: this motion is not in the best interests of Quebec, of Canada, of Mirabel, of the workers or of economic development. This is a rear-view motion; it is about nostalgia. This motion was brought forward by people who cannot accept that a government, any government, made much more ambitious plans earlier. It was thought that there would be a new mandate.

Supply

We are stuck with decisions made by the Conservative government, decisions that the Conservatives are stepping back from today. That is also kind of embarrassing. The leader of the Conservative Party goes to Mirabel and is ready to repudiate a lease that a Tory minister, the late Jean Corbeil, had signed under the leadership of Brian Mulroney. And yet, as we learned from the CBC, this same Conservative leader had dinner with Brian Mulroney the other night seeking to be convinced about Bombardier's development.

I guess Mr. Mulroney failed twice. He did not convince the leader of the Conservative Party to respect his government's signature or to support Bombardier. So there is something fishy going on.

He has another agenda. This motion is hiding something. I do not understand how the Bloc can get suckered into supporting an anti-Quebec motion.

Having said that, I find it regrettable that this motion is being debated today, while there are two potentially extraordinary projects on the horizon for Mirabel. It is the wrong signal to send but, thankfully, the government will stand firm.

• (1055)

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport, following his very eloquent speech that reminds me the time, several years ago, when he was working in a Montreal radio station. However, it was a little demagogic.

The motion before us today only talks about selling back 11,000 acres of land to farmers. The Minister of Transport says there is a lease with ADM and so on. We only want one thing. We have nothing against the expansion or the work that will be done at Mirabel. Indeed, the Bloc has always agreed and has always said that there was one too many airports. We cannot rewrite history, despite the Minister of Transport's intentions.

However, what we want is the selling back of 11,000 acres of land that are not being used and will not be used. There is enough space now for all the nice projects that the Minister of Transport could develop at Mirabel.

We believe that it is impossible for farmers, even though they have a lease—I think the minister will be able to recognize this—to mortgage, lease, give and transfer this land to their own children, since they are bound by a lease.

The question that I ask the minister is this. Has the government specific plans for these 11,000 acres of land that it could give back to farmers?

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue for his question.

We do not want to rewrite history; we want to write a new chapter of the history of Mirabel, a happy chapter, a chapter of development and of job creation, a chapter of economic wealth.

Of course, ADM made decisions. We know that we cannot rewrite the lease either. I think that the signature of a government minister has legal value. I know full well that the member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher would not like to embark on something that would give rise to endless lawsuits. I know that if the member for Abitibi—

Témiscamingue had in his riding a gem like Mirabel, he would fight tirelessly to ensure that nobody took away the smallest piece of it. I am convinced of that, since I know him well.

It is for this reason that I find it difficult to understand why the current member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel does not voice his outrage at seeing his riding lose an extraordinary tool of development.

We do not intend to rewrite history. We acknowledge the vicissitudes of history. However, as opposed to the opposition members, we have no intention of either giving up or halting the development of Mirabel. In its master plan, ADM, the legally responsible institution, has declared itself prepared to extend those 131 leases until 2023. This is quite a long period, that can yield quite a few crops indeed.

I want to reassure the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue that we will not jeopardize the big plans we have for Mirabel. On the contrary, we will put all our energy into them.

• (1100)

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was an interesting exchange between the leader of the official opposition and the Minister of Transport. The Minister of Transport, quite correctly, pointed out that he was a member and not a minister in the Trudeau government. He was a minister in the government of Mr. Turner.

Why does the Minister of Transport feel that he is under an obligation to defend the Trudeau legacy? He was not a minister during that period of time. He knows in his heart that a terrible mistake was made in the late sixties and the early seventies when 10,000 people were dispossessed of their property. He was not a minister in that government so what is in it for him? He does not have to answer for them. We heard it from him and we heard it from the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Those members cannot divorce themselves from the mistakes of the past but they know in their hearts that those mistakes were made, which is why they do not want to talk about anything else. If we were to check the record of those members we would see that over the years they have talked about everything except the 10,000 people who lost their land, and they still do not want to talk about that today. They want to talk about everything else under the sun except those human tragedies.

I would like to hear the member address that. I have not heard him yet but I have heard him talk about everything else. He told us to talk to the cargo handlers and the companies who want to use Mirabel. I say that he should talk to the farmers who lost their land. What are they going to do about them? That is what the minister should be talking about.

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I do not know where the member is coming from. We believe in the future of Mirabel. We know he does not. We believe there is a development potential there for cargo. We believe that as an industrial site Mirabel is offering a great perspective.

Supply

We know there are four groups right now that want to buy or rent the facilities at Mirabel, four groups that have until March 31 to complete their proposals.

We have a better project than that. Everyone in the House knows that Bombardier is looking at a series C project. Just the assembly plant would mean 2,500 jobs. We believe Mirabel has a great potential for that. If we want to build airplanes we have to test those airplanes and the best way to do that is at an airport, which is what Mirabel offers. It runs 24 hours a day and is a great place.

Obviously we would have liked to have passengers there, but it is not diverse enough, perhaps because some of the flights moved somewhere else. However at the end of the day we do not want to reduce the potential of Mirabel.

The Tory government signed a 60-year lease with a non-profit corporation and we want those Tories to respect the signatures. Otherwise the government will be drawn into a legal battle that will be a lawyer's dream but very costly for taxpayers.

We do not want to reduce the potential of Mirabel. We believe in the future of Mirabel and we will do everything to develop the industrial site and the cargo potential of Mirabel.

• (1105)

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the minister and I must say that I have rarely heard more hyperbole and more excessive rhetoric in this chamber on any occasion. I am tempted to say that he should just take a psychological Valium so we can get on with having a sensible discussion, but I am not sure if that is parliamentary.

I have a question arising out of the minister's insistence that in this debate he is hearing a lot of inconsistency and contradictions. Applying that test to the minister's own excessive rhetoric, I have two very specific questions.

I am quite sympathetic to the argument that we need to have a view to the future of the use of that Mirabel land. However, how is it not contradictory in this instance to be rejecting a proposal that 6,000 acres remain for the future use of Mirabel, when we know that the Toronto airport has 4,200 acres, the Ottawa airport has 4,500 acres, Heathrow airport, keeping in mind the size of Heathrow, has 2,700 acres, and Los Angeles airport has 3,500 acres? How is 6,000 acres for the future of Mirabel not sufficient?

In terms of contradictions, I am sure the minister knows that the government is about to eliminate over 500 units of family housing in the Halifax regional municipality. Housing that was in use by DND for military families will be eliminated from use. How is it consistent to argue that we should have a view to the use of land owned by government for future needs when there is a desperate need for affordable housing in my riding and in Nova Scotia, in fact all over this country, and the government is prepared to take those right out of public use?

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I must say that the hon. member chose the wrong examples. I happen to get all the complaints of citizens from Toronto. They do not believe the airport site is big enough. They get the noise and they get all kinds of problems because the airport does not have enough space. Frankly, the member has really taken the worst example.

The member wants to talk about Los Angeles. The same thing happens in Los Angeles. The population is right next to the airport and the airfield is much too small. They have all kinds of complaints.

I have respect for people, which is why we want the airport to work 24 hours a day without causing trouble or making any noise for anyone. We want people to sleep well at night. The airport can work 24 hours a day, the planes can work 24 hours a day and the cargo can come in a full 24 hours a day, which is why we need the space.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, the Bloc Québécois transport critic, for allowing me to be the first speaker on this important issue brought forward by the Conservative Party, namely the return of 11,000 acres of expropriated land to Mirabel farmers.

I had a speech planned, but instead I must answer the allegations made by the Minister of Transport. I do not know whether I should laugh or cry. After all, he is the Minister of Transport for Quebec as well as Canada. Either he does not know what he is talking about or he is a true demagogue. He is pitting the file of the land to be returned to Mirabel farmers against the Bombardier file. He is stooping as low as his political masters of the time.

Currently, 6,000 acres within the Mirabel fence have been put up for tender. The 11,000 acres were not even included in the ADM call to tender. It just happens that I was shown the ADM call to tender. I set up a regional committee, which ordered ADM, by registered mail, to appear so the committee could find out what it intended to do and what kind of call to tender it had put out. Luckily for us, the call to tender was tabled. It includes the terminal, the hotel, the administrative buildings and the warehouses located on the 6,000 acres, which is nothing like what we have been told. The ADM call to tender does not include the 11,000 acres outside the fence. Either the minister is a real demagogue or he does know what he is talking about.

You will reach your own conclusion, Madam Speaker. But I do not want to somehow pit the return of the land against Bombardier and the development of the industrial site within the 6,000 acres. It never was the intention of the Bloc Québécois to do such a thing.

I am surprised that the Minister of Transport, who is supposed to know his portfolio, would come here and tell the House, more or less, that there will be bids, but no one knows anything about these four proposals. It is simple. We do not need to know more about them because they are not related to the 11,000 acres that do not form part of the 6,000 acres available for development and therefore covered in the invitation to tender.

So, once again, I do not know why we are having this debate today. Perhaps it is because the Minister of Transport is trying to make us understand that he will not be giving Bombardier what it is asking for. Perhaps he is trying to find a way out, saying, "Look, the interested parties and the Conservatives want to return 11,000 acres of farmland and Bombardier will not get any help." Perhaps that is what this minister, this demagogue, is trying to do.

However, we have our eyes open and we have figured out what the minister is trying to do. We are going to defend Bombardier and the aerospace industry to our last drop of blood. And we will defend the farmers of Mirabel as well, because we defend the interests of Quebec.

I happily return to my speech now. The story of Mirabel began in 1967. The Liberal government of Lester B. Pearson finally understood that Dorval could no longer function as an international airport. Let us remember that in 1967 the only place in Canada that international flights could land was Montreal. Things have changed a great deal since then.

Let us also remember that it was the Department of Transport of Canada that opened the doors for more international flights to land in Canada, either in Montreal or Toronto. At the time, all international flights were into and out of Montreal. It was the Liberals who decided to give more and more international flights to Toronto. Then the Conservatives continued this policy. In that way, eventually, Montreal became a less important hub than Toronto.

The Liberal Party in 1967 decided that Dorval was too small for future development and obviously, in an urban area with many people around it, that was a wise decision. In my opinion, if ADM had decided to make the opposite decision, to keep Mirabel open while closing Dorval to passenger flights, today they would be hailed as geniuses, especially since September 11, 2001. But that is not what happened since, once again, the Liberals trusted in ADM. I will get back to ADM later.

•(1110)

However, we must remember that Mr. Pearson commissioned the study in 1967. On March 27, 1969, a plan is tabled to expropriate close to 100,000 acres of farmland. Since this acreage was in the middle of farmland, we can see what Mirabel has now become: an airport that is not served by highway 13, highway 50, or by a high speed train. When it was decided to build the airport in the middle of that farmland, highways 13 and 50, and a high speed train, were supposed to be built. It is the Liberals who, after thinking it over between 1969 and 1975, decided, when the airport was inaugurated, not to provide transportation services to Mirabel. This was a political decision and afterwards it was easy to defend the relevancy of Dorval. I will refrain from talking about the Liberal Party establishment in Montreal's West Island, but the fact is that there is some truth to this.

So, the project involved 100,000 acres of farmland and a readjusting of the boundaries of a number of municipalities, namely Saint-Canut, Saint-Antoine, Saint-Jérôme, Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, Saint-Janvier, Sainte-Monique, Saint-Augustin and Sainte-Scholastique. As we know, this area is now called Mirabel. The area was larger than the City of Laval, 10 times greater than the then world's largest airport and 27 times larger than the Dorval Airport. Over

Supply

3,000 owners were affected. We know the whole saga that was triggered by this decision.

In 1975, when the airport was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau called it the project of the century. However, highways 13 and 50 did not go to the airport and there was no high speed train connection, even though rails are installed in the basement. Indeed, let us not forget that rails were installed in the basement of the air terminal. This was an objective set by Mr. Pearson but, for some reason, the Trudeau government abandoned the idea. I should also point out that the current Minister of Transport was part of the Trudeau government.

There is something here that should be mentioned. When Mirabel opened in 1975, the situation was simple: Mirabel handled all international and chartered flights, while Dorval was used for domestic flights. A decision was to be made later to transfer all domestic flights to Mirabel. In 1982, a cabinet meeting was held in a Montreal hotel and the manager of the two airports was in attendance. At the time, it was Transport Canada that managed the airports. The Minister of Transport then announced that he would not transfer all passenger flights from Dorval to Mirabel. Authorities had already begun to give many international flights to Toronto and a decision was made to protect Dorval. This is what led to the current situation, that is the closing, on October 31, 2004, of the whole airport to passenger flights.

The minister boasts of the work of ADM. It is true that ADM was created by the Conservatives in 1992. I am not sure that they are proud of it today, since ADM is the mother of all airport authorities in Canada. Considering the waste of money that has been characteristic of these authorities in many airports across the country, I would say that, at the very least, the situation would call for a thorough review by the Auditor General of their records. By the way, these are non-profit agencies staffed by direct government appointments. However, they are outside the scrutiny of this Parliament and they can establish their own rates independently, given the fact that they are empowered to collect airport improvement fees. This power gives them their own revenues. Therefore, they are given a credit rating by the banks.

Since I have worked at the municipal level, I can say that cities, by comparison, must submit borrowing by-laws for review by Quebec's Ministère des Affaires municipales. However, in this particular instance, when airport authorities wish to borrow money, they are totally independent and they do not even need to obtain federal government approval. That system was established by the Conservatives and, since then, has been kept in place by the Liberals. The Liberals are simply washing their hands of it and actually enjoy ADM's poor management decisions.

Such is reality. We trust ADM. It is an independent corporation. My opponent, in the middle of the election campaign, even dared to say it is a private corporation. I do not know where he got his information. While it is true that ADM is a non-profit and independent organization which operates in its own way, it is also true that it has its own way of wasting money. In our opinion, there is shameless waste in the Mirabel file.

Supply

The fate of the farmers is left in the hands of ADM by this minister of Transport. ADM is an independent organization. Its purpose is not to manage agricultural lands. In the worst case scenario, it is a problem for it. It is simply trying to manage airport equipment. It is true that this responsibility was entrusted to ADM through a lease signed by the Conservatives. I have a copy of this 374-page document here. I am a lawyer by profession, therefore, I have examined this lease and I can say that the Minister of Transport can, if he wishes so, take management of the Mirabel operations from among ADM's responsibilities.

The minister would have so many reasons to do so. I will give you an example. I have taken an excerpt from the lease to make sure my stand is well understood.

• (1115)

I will quote article 8, at page 101, which covers the use of the rented premises:

The tenant shall use the rented premises for the purposes of a major international airport and, without prejudice to paragraph 7.02.09, for purposes that are not incompatible with the management, the operation and the maintenance of the airport. The tenant shall ensure that all occupants and assignees use the rented premises for purposes that are not incompatible with the management, the operation and the maintenance of the airport. In addition, the tenant undertakes not use or allow others to use, in whole or in part, the rented premises for any commercial activity for purposes other than those pertaining to a major international airport [...] and, in all cases, the whole shall be in accordance with this lease and with the approved land-use plan.

Thus, it must be understood that, when the lease was signed, there was a land-use plan. This is the second time it has been altered under Liberal rule. ADM is allowed to do things other than those set out in the original lease.

I know that, at the conclusion of the bidding process, you will need to make further changes. Indeed, we do not know what will be in there, but I would tell you that the first role of this airport is the operation of a major international airport. This is why you expropriated 100,000 acres of land and displaced 3,000 families. Not to build a shopping centre.

Of course, this is the whole point and today, farmers are entitled to seek the return of those 11,000 acres. ADM has, in fact, decided not to operate a major international airport, and above all not on these 11,000 acres. In addition, it has decided to use the bidding process, in relation to everything, except the operation of a passenger airport is permitted. This is what is found in the call for tender.

I am asking the minister to read that document. The Montreal Airport is telling would-be bidders that they can operate everything, except a passenger airport. Is that what you call operating a major international airport? Is that the point of view of the minister? I have a problem with that. That is why, at the outset, I did not know whether I had to laugh or whether I had to cry.

The minister decided to collaborate with people who have no respect or concern for the farmers' interests. ADM has only one concern right now and that is to try to make Mirabel profitable because their rating has just gone down. Their credit rating has been going down for three years now. Such is the reality.

They need money at all cost. They do not want to lose the farmers' leases, because they get to keep that income. If ever the federal

government decided to sell the land, it would keep them because the money goes to the owners, not the tenants. Thus, ADM would not get anything.

ADM has no incentive to do business with the farmers. All they will try to do is increase the rent. Next they will try to get the municipal assessment lowered for the entire airport complex, because it is costing them too much in taxes and they need to make up ground for the mistakes they have made. Such is the reality.

In order to be able to transfer flights from Mirabel to Dorval, they paid, repaid and paid some more for companies to go to Dorval. This created a hole in ADM's finances, which they are trying to fill any way they can with help from the minister. To get us to forget about the 11,000 acres of land and the farmers, the minister, today in this House, is suggesting that a vote in favour of this motion is a vote against Bombardier and all aerospace development in Quebec.

At first I wondered if he said this because he truly did not understand his portfolio or if he is just a demagogue. I think he is a demagogue who takes after Pierre Elliott Trudeau. It suits him, especially when we know what happened, when we know that it was Pierre Elliott Trudeau who opened Mirabel. And this government had the nerve to name Dorval airport after him. How nice.

This would not be their first mistake or insult to Quebeckers, far from it. The fact remains that there are still farmers in Mirabel who are working hard to earn a living. They have problems too.

As you know, the mad cow crisis is causing problems for farmers in all sectors. The farmers have to rent these 11,000 acres. And renting is not like owning. You cannot change the layout, you do not have the same relations with bankers. This is what Mirabel farmers have to live with. They have never stopped to develop this land, these 11,000 acres. But there are still 6,000 acres that could be used by Bombardier and all the minister's great projects.

• (1120)

I will be glad to rise in the House when he tables his policy on aerospace and helps the whole industry. Of course, Bombardier is to be found in Mirabel, so are Bell Helicopter and a host of parts makers. It is a great sector.

Indeed, we could lose it if the minister does not hurry. I hope he will not say today that we will lose it because of the return of 11,000 acres of land not used by ADM. They are not part of the call for tenders made to different future partners. This was not the object of the operation. Such is the reality.

What we want to do today is return the 11,000 acres of land to the farmers, who have lived through human drama. I thanked the leader of the Conservative Party for mentioning the book that was written about this. Families were decimated. Some people are still having difficulty coming to terms with the fact that they were expropriated.

I cannot foresee the day when the Liberal government, which started off with 100,000 acres and ended up with 17,000 acres and which now uses only approximately 3,500 of them, will be able to use all the 17,000 acres. I do not want to indulge in demagoguery, but I do not believe we will see it during the minister's life.

Once again, if the situation ever gets really good, the land required can be expropriated a second time. It is that simple. The minister can take umbrage if he wishes to but, in fact, the powers of governments at all levels, be it local, provincial or federal, are in keeping with needs.

The error was to expropriate too much land. If again, 50 or 100 years down the road, that land is needed again, people will understand. However, I am convinced that this will not happen in my lifetime and I know for a fact that I am younger than the minister.

Once again, I was happy to speak today. The Bloc Québécois will also be happy to vote this afternoon in the Standing Committee on Transport. My colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher tabled a learned motion, which will be voted on today by the Committee. The motion put forward in this House will be voted on next week. It is clear that the Bloc Québécois will support it, as you have understood, of course.

We only wish that past mistakes will never be repeated. What we have now is a cacophony of mistakes made by the Liberals. The tragedy of this situation is that the Minister of Transport tried once more today to justify the mistake in order to save Bombardier. After saving Bombardier, he will find some new excuse to try to save yet another party.

None of this is easy to hear, particularly when we have to cope with the people who have had to suffer all this upheaval. He, of course, is far removed from all that. As they say, out of sight, out of mind. So what may happen to the farmers of Mirabel is of no importance to the minister. That is his choice. But there are others in this place who have made the decision to no longer put up with these mistakes made by the federal government and to take steps to correct them.

We are focussing all our political know-how on doing so. The Bloc Québécois, of course, but also the Conservatives, and I hope we will see the NDP supporting this motion as well. Politicians have to know how to make use of this tool, the House of Commons. The people expropriated and the farmers of Mirabel are in luck to have a minority government at present, as I hope it will serve their cause well.

Once again, I hope I will manage to convince the minister, at least partially, of at least one thing. He must stop pitting the farmers' case against that of Bombardier. There is really no connection between the two.

On behalf of the residents of Mirabel, of the farm families of Mirabel, I would ask the minister to show a little compassion. There is still time to show a bit of respect and compassion. I would ask him to vote in favour of this motion in the House of Commons. That is what we in the Bloc Québécois will be doing, and no doubt the Conservatives as well, this being their motion. I hope the NDP will also be voting in favour of this motion, so that this injustice, this great injustice, will be remedied. Let us never forget that 3,000

Supply

families were uprooted, the greatest displacement of a population within Canada since the deportation of the Acadians.

I think it is time this situation came to end and the 11,000 acres returned to their owners. That will still leave 6,000 acres within the perimeter of development. That is, as we will hear, twice the area of Dorval. In my opinion, that is ample for anything the Transport minister may want to do.

• (1125)

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for his speech. However, his conclusion frightens me. The Bloc Québécois position is that we should give back the land to the farmers, and if we need it one day, we can simply expropriate again. I heard him say that three times.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher never would have said such a thing. I cannot believe what I am hearing. I know that the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel is a lawyer and that they love expropriations, but come on!

What this all boils down to is that they do not have much ambition for Mirabel, but if by chance the government and ADM managed to fully develop it, they would simply expropriate again. No big deal.

They were lamenting the fate of the expropriated. Would others be any less sad? Is the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel trying to tell us that they will try to buy back one group and return for the others later? That is a strange way to look at the situation.

I assume he let his emotions get the better of him, or maybe it was a holdover from his former career, but this cannot be the official stance of the Bloc Québécois. Will the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel stand up and say that this is the Bloc's official position and that if we give the land back and later find out that there is a good development opportunity in Mirabel, we will expropriate again? Is that correct?

• (1130)

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, the minister is his same old self. I would like him to understand that we have 17,000 acres of land on our hands, 11,000 thousand of which we will not use, and he knows that. Six thousand acres are being developed and about 3,500 acres are already developed. There are 2,500 acres left, and that is plenty for his and ADM's capabilities.

The problem is the minister wants to keep this land for eternity. I will not be here for eternity. If, one day, they need part of eternity, other people will be able to make the proper decisions.

Right now, with everything that is going on, and given all the facts at hand, after everything that happened in the past, and for the simple reason that this land is being used by farmers who earn a living from it, it would be about time to hand them back the land they have been taking care of for decades. I hope this will be done with the agreement of all members.

[English]

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, listening to the debate, and in particular listening to the Minister of Transport, I am hearing what I have heard for 11 years in the House.

Supply

Over and over the Liberal government talks about what it believes in, what it wants, how it sees things, and how it believes this country should operate. However, one thing is missing, and particularly on this issue. He has been up talking about “we, we, we”. He has never responded to my hon. colleague from Niagara Falls, the transport critic for our party, who asked him specifically to forget about what the government’s false vision might be on this issue, but rather to talk about the people whose lives it has affected in such a terrible way.

The government plundered the land from the people, the farmers, who had visions. We are talking about the people of Canada incidentally, the farmers of that land who had visions of a future for them and their families that would span decades and perhaps centuries of farming in that particular area.

The land was ripped from their grasp, ripped out of their dreams, for what became probably the biggest white elephant investment that a Liberal government ever made in the history of the years during which it was in charge of the country.

I want to ask the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel a question. Is this not just typical of the way that Liberal government members have acted for so many years while in power? It has been all about them, what they feel, and what they say is best for the country, not about what is best for the people of this country. Is this not a perfect example of the—

An hon. member: Arrogance?

Mr. Richard Harris: The arrogance, yes. It is the arrogance and dictatorial way that they have governed this country for years. Is this not just another example? It is all about them and not about the people of the riding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, first, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. He is right. It is as if there is no salvation outside the Liberal Party. That is the position of the transport minister and of all the Liberals. The fact is they cannot recognize past errors. That is why so many people do not trust politicians anymore.

It is hard to stand here, in 2004, and listen to the transport minister when he tries to convince us he did not make a mistake. It is not the Liberals who gave back part of the land. If they had remained the government, they would have kept those 80,000 acres. They would never admit they made a mistake. Today, we would not be talking about 17,000 acres, but 100,000, if the Liberals had been in power.

My hon. colleague got the picture. That is why I am proud of the Conservative Party. I hope that the NDP will support us in this fight, to ensure that the people of Quebec and Canada can correct this mistake and that we can be magnanimous and say, “We have made a mistake. Here, we are giving you your land back”. That is basically what all opposition parties in this House are doing, trying to say, “They made a mistake. Let us correct it”. In my opinion, that is the way to go.

•(1135)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find it hard to even comprehend the situation here. We have the Minister

of Transport debating the Bloc, which he helped found. He has switched back and forth a number of times. Maybe we will see something happen again, but it shows how unusual the situation has become here.

In terms of duplicity and of having one standard and changing to another, the Minister of Transport refused to answer the question put by the member for Halifax about the fact that the government is disposing of public housing for our defence. At the same time, the Minister of Public Works is looking at disposing our public buildings and institutions, yet at the same time he wants to protect that footprint.

I would like to ask the hon. member about that duplicity. It is an important part of this debate. On the one hand, the government thinks that it should actually preserve this footprint that has been expropriated from people, and at the same time, it is not willing to commit to a significant need of assuring that our employees have places to work, have a good environment, and also have affordable housing. So there is a demand, and the government wants to get rid of those facilities. Where there is not, it wants to maintain them. I find that hypocritical.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from the NDP for his question. Of course, he understood perfectly. The Liberal federal government engages in uncontrolled development and makes mistakes it will not admit to making.

As I said earlier, the worst thing a politician can do is keep apologizing, giving reasons and making excuses, as the minister did today, talking about the 11,000 acres of land that is not being used by Bombardier and never will, and so on.

He is trying to justify the Liberal mentality and philosophy, and this is painful to hear in this House. There are residents and farmers of Mirabel watching—greetings to them, by the way—who will find it particularly painful to see that they are being put in context.

It is not a pleasant situation when a minister tells you, “If you maintain your position, if you do not back off and stop hassling us about the 11,000 acres we are not using, you may jeopardize the jobs at Bombardier”. That is not pleasant for a community. Yet that is what the minister did today, using all sorts of arguments in an attempt to discourage people from voting against a mistake made by the Liberal Party.

Incidentally, the minister was there in 1982. Personally, I like to think that one of his reasons for switching to the Bloc Québécois was precisely in reaction against the mistake made in Mirabel. Today, however, I am realizing that this is not what happened.

So, I commend the hon. members from the NDP and hope that they will support the motion.

[*English*]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Madam Speaker, first, I want to present the financial costs that have been incurred at Mirabel Airport and then I will give a bit of a history, so that those of us in the House will understand some of the dynamics as well as all Canadians.

It is hard, on an issue such as this, for all Canadians to see the benefit of spending a day discussing it or to see the big issue, but I think once they hear the financial costs and the history of Mirabel, it will hit home to each and every Canadian.

Originally, Mirabel was estimated to cost \$425 million when planning began in the late 1960s. That money was spent in the first of several planned phases of the installation and by the time it opened for business, the projected price tag was \$1.5 billion. Five years later the airport was losing money at the rate of more than \$20 million a year and has been a loser ever since.

Montreal Mirabel International Airport is now used exclusively for cargo flights, not for passenger flights. The passenger flights ended October 31, 2004. We can give some credit to the government, which made a decision to close it to passenger flights, and we will not see the losses of \$20 million a year. However, it does open up another situation, which I will get into after I give a bit more history on Mirabel.

It was constructed as part of a major project by the Canadian federal government under Pierre Trudeau for Montreal, originally to replace Dorval. It was not to be a part of Dorval or to work alongside Dorval, but to replace Dorval. From the start Mirabel was controversial. In order to build the airport, the government expropriated 100,000 acres of land. That, in itself, was absolutely scandalous. That was from about 3,000 property owners. Can hon. members imagine, 3,000 property owners just having their land taken away from them to put in place another airport? It gets better.

It was a huge expense and during the process, and this will shock all hon. members in the House and all Canadians, there were allegations of corruption and patronage. There is a shock. The airport was opened in 1975 with great fanfare. Montreal's Olympic Games were coming, and the international airport was deemed crucial to the games' success and the city's future as an international destination.

Supporters predicted that Mirabel would become a gateway to the world, luring 60 million passengers annually by 2010. It never fulfilled that promise. At its peak it drew no more than three million passengers. Three million passengers for 100,000 acres of expropriated land. Foreign media passengers at the airport have been calling it a white elephant ever since. There is no question that Mirabel, as a major passenger airport, never, ever followed-through.

The airport's location near the community of Mirabel was also a big mistake. It was the result of a fundamentally flawed compromise between the federal government and the Quebec government that satisfied no one in the end. The federal government had originally intended the new facility to be the international airport for the capital region, plus Transport Canada envisioned it being built to the west of Montreal. The province, on the other hand, was looking to lure Quebec City travellers to the airport and wanted it built to the east, near Drummondville, almost halfway between the two cities. It was a compromise that did not work for anybody. It had a couple of strikes against it right from the beginning, namely, to split flights between Mirabel and Trudeau, formerly Dorval, and the failure to build the necessary road and rail links from Mirabel to Montreal.

This has not been an experiment that jeopardized the future of 3,000 families that worked. It did not happen. It looks like it was

Supply

someone's idea to do this and to heck with how it affected anybody. Right from the get go it was not done in a proper manner.

Toronto's Pearson International quickly picked up steam in the seventies, taking flights away from Mirabel. We had a situation where poor government planning, wastage of dollars time and time again, affected the lives of numerous people whose land was taken.

It was anticipated that a new airport away from the city but with reliable passenger rail links, again where the government has failed and continues to fail, would be successful. However, debates between levels of government moved the site further from the city than reasonably reachable and the only passenger links are by a long road. From day one, it was not a good move.

Dorval was flooded at the time due to too many jets using Dorval as a stopover to refuel. However, the advent of long range aircraft caused airplanes to stop landing to refuel there and as a result Dorval was no longer overcrowded. To this date there is not a major issue with Dorval.

• (1140)

What we are talking about today is not 100,000 acres. In 1985-86 the government returned 80,000 acres of that land, leaving about 17,000 acres. Someone's estimates were way off right from the get go. Of that 17,000 acres, farmers want 11,000 acres, leaving 6,000 acres for use by Mirabel, which is only used now for cargo services and charter services at some point. When the government returned the land in 1985-86, it made \$81 million dollars. The land was expropriated, sold back and that is where it stands.

Today we have an opportunity for the government to right a wrong that took place. I think there are only 40 some farmers in this case now and that should seem like no big deal. The reality is we are dealing with a situation that affected a number of farmers initially. Those same family members are involved in this process. As someone from outside of Quebec and outside of the area, it looks to me as though the land was falsely expropriated. The government never needed that amount of land. At this point in time, when that land is definitely not being used, there is no feasible reason why it should not be returned.

The suggestion that some day down the road it might be needed, the 6,000 acres would still be ample. My colleague from Halifax mentioned what was presently being used for the Toronto airport, 4,200 acres; Ottawa, 4,500 acres; Heathrow, 2,700 acres; and Los Angeles, 3,500 acres. How can the government suggest that somehow more than 6,000 acres will be needed at Mirabel when we still have Trudeau airport? It is not acceptable.

Supply

It leads me to question the government's trusteeship in this case. It leads me to question what its intentions are, whether there is an intention there. We have seen many instances where it parcelled off that land to some private company, some friends of the Liberals, just as there were allegations of patronage initially. There is that risk, in spite of everything we dealt with in the last two years in the House related to the government's feeding taxpayer dollars to Liberal friendly people. It is not right.

All Canadians should stand up in support of those 40 some farmers in Mirabel and say to the Liberals that they will not keep their land and use it for their own selfish purposes. The right thing to do is to return the land to those farmers if it is not needed for a passenger airport.

The transport minister has mentioned that the government has an agreement with the airport authorities. He says that the government cannot break that agreement with the airport authorities. The government is the master and the initiator of those airport authorities. The government appoints those individuals to airport authorities.

There have been questions in a number of instances throughout Canada as to who may be on those airport authorities. I say may because I think some who are on those authorities throughout Canada are very good individuals who work for the benefit of the community. However, there have been questions with regard to the airport authority in Montreal, that there was some Liberal patronage.

The government is the instigator of the airport authorities. The government can change what took place with the contract. The contract was for an airport authority to operate the airport, the intent being for passenger service. Things have changed and passenger service is no longer there. To suggest that the government cannot change the deal with the airport authority or the airport authority cannot renegotiate and give that money back to the farmers is just not an acceptable reason.

The Transport minister might think he will be tied up in court with the airport authorities. As a Parliament, we are the master of the legislation that put those airport authorities into existence. Now we are in a minority Parliament and perhaps we need to take the government to task about changing that right here and now, for all the airport authorities, so we do not have that kind of a situation.

Perhaps the minister does not think the government can have control of the airport authorities to ensure that they provide the best service to Canadians as far as passenger service and act responsibly in that. If the Parliament of Canada says that the responsible thing to do is return that 11,000 acres, then something is amok within the Liberal cabinet and it needs to change. It is absolutely not acceptable.

• (1145)

I say to my colleagues from the Bloc, we intend to support this motion. I say it to the Bloc because its members have been very active in supporting the farmers in Mirabel. I say to the Conservatives, who brought the motion forward today, we will be supporting it for all the right reasons.

Land was expropriated unjustly in my view. It is presently being kept falsely. I do not believe for one second that the Liberal government's intentions are noble in this instance. I think there is an

underlying plan here. I am not willing to see even 43 families, or 43 farmers or 43 individuals suffer unjustly because of false actions of the Liberal government.

• (1150)

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad my hon. colleague spoke about our farm families. Does she believe, as I do, that our agricultural communities across Canada have been neglected badly by the Liberal government? Does she agree that it is just once again another step in Canada's roll down the slippery slope of being unable to provide good quality food, which we do at this time, for our citizens? If the Liberal government keeps neglecting agriculture and our farm families the way it is, will this lead to further problems in our food industry?

An hon. member: Where is the relevance?

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, my colleague is asking where is the relevance. I will tell him where it is. The relevance is falsely expropriating 100,000 acres of farmland and then not putting in place the airport that it said it would. The relevance is having 17,000 acres of farmland, when the government probably only needs 6,000 acres of it. The relevance is not giving that land back to the farmers. It is good, arable farmland which they have been leasing and farming all these years. It has not been used for what the government expropriated it. That is relevance. It is a matter of the government not doing what it should be doing for the priorities of Canada. It is just not acceptable to do that.

When we look at this, what we have is the feudal landlord. It was the farmers' land, the government took it away and then leased it back to them. There is no reason why that land should not be returned. It has never been used for what it was intended. It should not have to be used in the future because there is ample space available. It is unconscionable that the government would not give that land back.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to ask a question of the member for Churchill. She did a good job explaining the misconception that we have no control over our authorities. I would like her to expand on those comments. An important part in this debate is that the will of Parliament cannot be carried out by the airport authority or it will contest the will of Parliament. I find that to be such a weak excuse for taking action that is unacceptable.

In addition to the land planning issue in this discussion, the Minister of Transport identified that there might be a use for the land industrially. We have watched a lot of our farmland being devoured by urban sprawl. That is a big problem for a number of different municipalities across the country. We are losing an opportunity to have a strong agricultural community.

It is appropriate for the land would be restored to the farming institution, and realize the success of the past. Right now that land is leased, which undermines family traditions and lifestyles of farming. By returning it, those families would then have control of the land and the soil.

Supply

•(1155)

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, there is no question that farmers and farm families are not being supported as they should be. They were the initial builders of our country. We are always going to need food. One has to wonder why the government would not put supports that are needed in place for farmers not only at Mirabel but throughout the country.

The government thinks absolutely nothing about giving billions of dollars to Bombardier and other corporations over the years. It thinks nothing about giving billions of dollars to companies to invest in other countries. Yet the government gives no support to our farmers and their families, who are here to build our country and who have steadfastly stayed and promoted good living in our country. It has given them nothing. The government is chopping away at all the foundations that keep those farms in place.

There is an issue here. The government has to put greater supports in place. We need to recognize that we will always need those farms. If we allow that land to be continually used for industrial settings, then we will be trying to find food resources for our own people. When we have the best in the world here in Canada, why would we do that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Madam Speaker, first, I would like to thank my colleague from Churchill for her support in this file. I know she has been sitting on the transport committee for several years.

The minister seems to rely on the airport authority ADM, in Montreal. I would tell you that this is part of the problem. Should ADM decide not to use those lands because it actually does not use them, the only thing it does being rent collection, it could very well have said that it did not need them.

I would like it to tell me how she views airport authorities. Do they have too much power? Would it be time for Parliament to look into giving organizations, not-for-profit corporations enormous budgets, when they do not come under parliamentary control?

[*English*]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I believe that has taken place. In the larger airports it is more prevalent. We need to take that control back. The government has admitted that it does not have control, and that is a serious issue.

New legislation was to be introduced in the House in the last Parliament, which I expect to be reintroduced. Through that legislation, the government was going to give them more opportunity to develop in ways that were not necessarily related to an airport. That is wrong. In this case it is further emphasized because the expropriated land was never used for the airport. It is wrong. We need to get control back over the airport authorities or do away with them altogether.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise on this motion by the Conservative Party, which asks that the 11,000 unused acres of land outside the perimeter of Mirabel airport be returned and made available to the farmers and individuals who owned this property.

There are a couple of reasons why I am very pleased that my party has brought forward this motion. One of them is that it puts a spotlight on one of the sorriest chapters of the Trudeau legacy in this country.

In the early 1970s the government made an announcement that it was going to expropriate approximately 97,000 acres of land for a new airport in Montreal. To put this in perspective, it is as if the people in my riding of Niagara Falls on their way home this afternoon heard that the Government of Canada was going to expropriate the Town of Fort Erie, all of the City of Niagara Falls and displace every resident in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Those are the proportions that we are talking about.

To put further into context the 97,000 acres of land, Heathrow Airport, which I believe may be the busiest airport in the world, has 2,700 acres of land, Los Angeles has 3,500, and Toronto has 4,200. Even with this motion, another 1,000 acres are available to Mirabel airport over and above that which is allocated to Toronto, despite the fact that passenger service now is discontinued at Mirabel airport and we have no idea from the government when it is going to reopen again, although we hear it will be some time in the future.

Nonetheless, that is not what we are talking about. We are not talking about those 5,200 acres. We are talking about the 11,000 acres that are unused and unneeded. That is what we are talking about. I believe it was one of the saddest chapters in the Trudeau legacy. I put it to the Minister of Transport and his friend, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, what is in it for them to defend what so clearly was a mistake on behalf of their party? Neither of them were ministers in Mr. Trudeau's government. They were ministers under subsequent Liberal prime ministers. What is it about them and their colleagues that they cannot admit this obvious mistake?

The mistakes were compounded at that particular site. They grew and grew and never once did the government ever take responsibility for it when there were hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of cost overruns. Members may remember what the government said. It said it was the contractors who were to blame. The local authorities were to blame. At one point the Province of Quebec was to blame. Everybody was to blame except the federal Liberals.

An hon. member: They are never at fault.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: They are never at fault. They spoke with one voice all those years.

When there was trouble getting airlines to locate at Mirabel, the airlines were to blame. If there were passengers who did not want to use the airport for whatever reason, it was the passengers who were to blame. There was always somebody else to blame except themselves. This has been a pattern within the Liberal Party. I guess Liberals feel it is their duty, which I do not quite understand, to defend everything in the Trudeau legacy. I do not really understand it.

The greatest Canadian who ever lived was Sir John A. Macdonald. There is no question about that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Supply

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Here is what I say to them. They can have their coffee klatch, get a few people together, keep dialling up the phones and vote for Mr. Trudeau. I do not have a problem with that. They should go ahead on that. It is not going to change the facts of this country or how this country was put together, but one does not have to be blinded by the fact that huge mistakes were made, and this was one of the biggest ones.

The mistake was those 10,000 to 12,000 people who were displaced, the people who had their property ownership taken away. I first became involved with this as an observer before I became a member of Parliament. Later, when I became a member of Parliament, when this issue was raised the part that touched me most deeply was the people whose properties were being arbitrarily taken away by the government. I believe that property rights are something that touches Canadians. I think that touches all human beings very deeply.

• (1200)

In my years of living in Niagara Falls and representing that area, one of the things that has impressed me is that people who have come to this country from other parts of the world invariably tell me many things but one of the things that is very consistent about people who have come to this country is their love of private property. Quite frankly, I was disappointed that when the Constitution of this country was amended there were not some provisions for property rights—

Hon. Jean Lapierre: It was the NDP.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: The transport minister says it was the NDP. That is quite correct. The NDP did not want property rights in at the time but that does not absolve the government of the time. The Progressive Conservatives were in support of it and the federal Liberals should have gone ahead with it but they did not.

Nonetheless, people wherever they come from in the world always tell me the same thing. Many of those individuals have come from communist countries. We can talk about the blight of communism. We can talk about how communism ruined every economy in which it took hold and how one of the things that is consistent about people from that was their loss of private property. It touches people deeply.

Indeed, we do not have to come from a communist country. I remember a colleague of mine, a man by the name of Kevin Mulvey, whom I went to school with at the University of Windsor and who told me that when he graduated from Windsor he bought a home in the Windsor area. I congratulated him on that. He told me he believed that he was the first member of his family to ever own land. He was an emigrant from England and his family had never owned land. This was something that touched him very deeply.

Indeed, my own ancestors came from Scotland as a result of property problems. Members may be aware of something in history known as the Highland clearances in the 1800s, in which Scottish citizens, including members of my own family, were evicted. They had lived there since the beginning of recorded time, but through government policy or government complicity they were evicted in the 1850s and they immigrated to Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

Over the years I have been in touch with many generations of my own family as I knew them. We have never received an apology for that. Nonetheless they came to other countries and indeed they have tried, but that is what drove them out of Scotland.

Indeed, when I was there on my honeymoon I could not help but reflect on that when we drove through the empty valleys. I wondered if anyone had any second thoughts about clearing out the population of the Highlands in Scotland.

Nonetheless this is something that is very deep in all human beings. I thought about those thousands of people who were evicted from their expropriated land. We saw the heartbreak and the heartache that accompanied it. It seems to me that there are many Canadians who could identify with this.

For some of those individuals, it is not even as if today the Government of Canada was going to expropriate the city of Niagara Falls. I have lived in my home for 16 years. I could live with it. If my home was taken away, I could go somewhere else although I would never want to leave the area of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It seems to me that the people who were the victims of this aspect of the Trudeau legacy were not people who just lived there or had just moved into the neighbourhood. These people and their ancestors had been there for over 300 years. Talk about deep roots in an area: for over 300 years those individuals and their families had lived there and raised their children and these were the individuals who found out on an afternoon on the radio that their land was going to be expropriated for the new Mirabel airport.

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Public interest.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: The minister says it was public interest. What about the interests of those 12,000 people? That is what I ask him. What about their interests? Who was worried about them? Certainly not the government of the time.

I remember when the move was made in the 1980s to try to rectify this. Let us guess who was up on their feet in the House of Commons fighting it every step of the way. It was the members of the Liberal Party. We would have to have seen the debates to believe it. They threw up every roadblock and every argument about getting into that area. Why? Because they had to confront the mistakes of their own past. That was what the problem was.

That is what the problem is today. They do not want to talk about it. I listened to the Minister of Transport and I am sure we will hear other members of the government. They want to talk about everything, everything else except the thousands of people who lost their property.

• (1205)

They do not want to talk about all those individuals who might get their properties back today because they do not want to have to confront that. If one asks members of the Liberal Party about the expropriation at Mirabel, they will want to talk about the price of coffee in Mexico or they will reach in their pockets and want to show pictures of their grandchildren, anything to get off the subject of those thousands of people who lost their properties.

Supply

Hon. Jean Lapierre: We weren't in government for nine years.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: He says we were in government. I can say that when moves were made to rectify this, it was the members of his party who would not. We can check *Hansard* and find out—

Hon. Jean Lapierre: You were in power.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: They wanted to do anything, anything at all, and when the move was made to offer the land back to the people who had owned it, they tracked it to see if there were any mistakes. But the mistake they never lived up to was the mistake that was made by them. That was the one they never wanted to acknowledge.

This story is not at an end. This motion is brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition and I and my colleagues are pleased to support it and pleased to have the support of other members in the House. It should have the support of the members of the Liberal Party.

They do not have to apologize for the mistakes of former Liberal prime ministers. Do what is right, that is what I say to people. They should do what is right and the Liberal members know what is right. Quite apart from the fact that they do not want to talk about it, they know deep down that what they did was a terrible mistake.

The job is not yet completed. There is plenty of land for Mirabel airport for the foreseeable future and the land that we are proposing be given back to the rightful owners to correct those mistakes is well within the purview of this government, but this mistake is just part of the arrogance with which the government has always treated property owners.

I remember speaking about this issue in 1988 in the House of Commons. I also raised the matter that is still with us about the St. Lawrence Seaway. There were expropriated lands in the Niagara Peninsula to twin the canals.

Have you heard that proposal lately, Mr. Speaker? Is anyone going to twin the Welland Canal? I asked the Minister of Transport if there were any plans for it. I will tell the House what the Liberals will tell us. They will say, "Well, we expropriated the land, there is no plan whatsoever, but it is always for the foreseeable future".

The people who suffered because their lands were expropriated, like the people at Mirabel, just have to live with that. The Minister of Transport says it is the public interest, but what about those people's interests? They are Canadians too and they deserve to have their interests heard in this chamber, but again what the minister would say is that it was turned over to a crown corporation and "what can we do about that?"

The Liberals create these crown corporations and then nothing can be done. They have been the government, for heaven's sake, for 80 out of the last 100 years. They could correct all these mistakes if they put a mind to it, but they will not. They will not correct those mistakes. Why? Because they have to look at their own past and look within themselves to correct a mistake they made. That is a pattern and it is a pattern that I have seen throughout my life.

I remember about a year ago when there were D-Day celebrations and it was revealed that the Liberals were going to send 60 veterans and 70 bureaucrats. Do members remember that one? The

government changed its mind, but what was fascinating to me was that the Liberals changed their minds because they had to be shamed into doing it. It is always the same: never do what is right because it is right to do it, do it because one has been shamed into it. Yes, in the end the government helped out Canadian veterans and sent some more. The Liberals had no choice. The spotlight was on them.

It is like the mess of the sponsorship scandal. When the light is on the Liberals, what are they going to say? They say they are going to repent. The Prime Minister was as mad as hell and was going to fix up things here. Yes, he was going to fix up things because everybody knew about it then, but that is always the way and that certainly is the way for the people of Mirabel.

I hope the people who had that land expropriated are following this along with the people who had land expropriated that would never be needed for the St. Lawrence Seaway. I hope all people who have been victimized by governments will have a look at this and follow the debate. What they will find is the same thing that took place in the 1980s. Every time the subject has ever been raised the government does not want to talk about it. They will talk about anything else, about 100 different issues, about the price of coffee, they will say, let us talk about that. It is Mirabel, we will say, but they will want to do something else.

● (1210)

It is a shameful part of the Trudeau legacy but I say to those members that they do not have to be stuck with it. They should do the right thing. Let us join together. This is a minority Parliament. The Minister of Transport has said to me on a number of occasions that he is flexible and wants to work with people, so let him work with all of us here.

He does not want to talk about those 11,000 people. He says that there are procedural difficulties and that there are contracts. There is a man on the moon. There is always something holding them up. I say that he should do the right thing and Canadians will thank him.

I hope the members of the Liberal Party get on their feet and say, "Yes, this is a minority Parliament. We want to work together. It was a mistake from a long time ago. We can admit that mistake. Let us move on and do something for these people because that is what is right".

● (1215)

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this debate has turned fairly partisan but how could we expect otherwise? The motion today has been put forward by the opposition. I am going to suggest very briefly that the opposition has been somewhat bankrupt in putting forward this issue. This debate, as the opposition has put forward, is not about the future. It is about the past. In the debate so far, the hon. member has talked about Sir John A. Macdonald, Pierre Trudeau and building the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The Liberal Party is looking to the future here. The debate today is not about land use. Farmers are using the land now. It is in agricultural use, so that is not the issue here today. It is about ownership. The Conservative Party wants to talk about who owns the land, not the use of the land.

Supply

Another very important point, I put to the member who just spoke, is that the land is now in public ownership under a 50 or 50-plus year lease. A public authority controls the land.

Hon. Jean Lapierre: Signed by them.

Mr. Derek Lee: Yes, the Conservative government put it out there. It is controlled by a public authority where there was federal, provincial and municipal representation. In fact the feds have a minority representation on the board. Why does the member not just admit that this is about Conservative values and about who owns it, and not about the future? Why does he not just admit that and maybe we can have a better debate?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I do agree with the member on one thing. He is right when he says that this is about Conservative values. A Conservative value is doing what is right for Canadians and standing up for Canadians. That has been a Conservative tradition in this country since Confederation.

He talks about ownership and, yes, that is what we are talking about. We are talking about the deprivation of ownership of all those people who owned that land. If the member was listening to my comments, I said that this right to own property was something that touches Canadians and all human beings very deeply. The member should ask the people in his riding, who came from eastern Europe, what it was like to live under a communist regime. Yes, there was public ownership but when their lands, their farms and their homes were expropriated by communist authorities, ask them what ownership was. If he tells them that it was public ownership where they came from, the people will tell him that their lands and their homes were stolen and they do not want to hear him talk about public ownership.

The worst part about this is that those people who had their land expropriated knew that the land was not necessary. When the Constitution was amended it should have put in provisions with respect to property rights, so individuals who have had their land taken away by the Crown or some public authority would have a remedy, that they would be able to challenge that if in fact it was proven that the land was not necessary. However, 97,000 acres were taken. Heathrow airport only has 2,700 acres and here we are talking about 97,000 acres. That would be the most incredibly sized airport in the world.

When there were problems with it, everybody was to blame except the Liberals. Every aspect, every cost overrun and every passenger who did not use the airport were to blame. It was never the government.

It is about ownership and I think he should get behind this Conservative motion. He says that it is in the past. Wrongs in the past should be addressed, not swept under the carpet. The member can check the record on this but his party has been consistent for 30 years in not wanting to talk about this but that is wrong. It was wrong in the 1970s when they took this land from these people, and in 2004 it is still wrong.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, let me congratulate the member for Niagara Falls for his question.

As to the lease to which the minister is fond of referring, a copy of which I have here, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that it was signed in 1992 by a Conservative minister of the time. I am thus repeating what I was saying to the minister. At that time, people used to say that the tenant must use space rented for the purposes of a major international airport. In 1992 when we signed the lease it was a major international airport.

Indeed, I have tried to explain to the minister that, according to the lease signed, he can remove the lands from ADM's administration. He therefore has the power to revise the lease as there is no longer a major international airport. In addition, ADM, which is Montreal's airport authority, has just issued a call for tenders in which it mentions that the site it is offering, namely the airport, the hotel, administrative offices and all garages and warehouses can be put to any use, except that of transporting passengers.

These are not the purposes of operating a major international airport. Accordingly, I am asking the member whether he agrees with me on the fact that the government can act and force ADM to return the lands. It can even terminate the lease under which, again, ADM does not manage according to the agreements it signed in 1992.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, this is an old ploy by the Liberal Party. It sets up a wholly publicly owned crown corporation and then says that it cannot deal with it. The Liberals turned over land to the St. Lawrence Seaway. They do not know what they are supposed to do since Aéroports de Montréal has the land. Good heavens above, if they cannot govern then they should resign and get out of the business of government.

If there is a problem within federal jurisdiction, which this clearly is, they should come back to Parliament and change the law. That would be start to addressing the problem. They cannot address the problem by throwing up their hands and saying that they cannot do anything. They have only been in government for 80 of the last 100 years. If they cannot handle the business they should turn it over to a group of individuals who can get some of these things done.

I do not want to be partisan about this but I must say to all the members that they do not have to apologize for the mistakes that Liberal governments of the past made. What they need to do is get on board with this thing and do the right thing by Canadians.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I compliment our transport critic, the member for Niagara Falls, on an excellent and thoughtful speech. He really hit the nail on the head. He hit the root issue, which is the whole issue of property rights.

The disturbing trend that we find in Canada is that certain big issues under the rubric of property rights are not properly addressed. A few of them are the endangered species legislation in the last Parliament in terms of not respecting property owners; this issue here with the people around Mirabel; the issue of intellectual property rights; and the issue of ratifying the WIPO treaty and respecting the artists and creators we have here in Canada in terms of upgrading our copyright legislation.

However the member really hits the nail on the head when he says that it is a matter of respect for property rights, property rights being defined as having the right to own property and not being deprived thereof without fair market compensation.

The minister mentioned public interest. We recognize that but fair market compensation should then be applied. The fact is that people in this area were paid about \$210 an acre in 1969, but in 1970 the government then paid \$2,000 an acre to expropriate land for the airport it was planning to construct in Pickering, Ontario.

I just want the member to expand on that issue and expand on the whole issue of property rights and fair market compensation for the fact that people own land and should not be deprived thereof.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the member touches on a very important topic and this cavalier attitude toward people who own property is much too pervasive. It is not just at the federal level, it is also at the provincial level.

In my area of Niagara, and indeed southern Ontario, the Ontario government comes out with a green plan, a very laudable plan, to protect agricultural land. Who is going to disagree with that? As a municipal councillor, I said that I was having trouble finding in the proposal where it said that cheques would be sent to the people whose land would be affected. I asked whether the Ontario government would be sending cheques to those farmers who all of a sudden are told that they are now part of a green plan and will not be able to use their land for anything other than agriculture.

That was not in there because of this cavalier attitude toward people who own property. It is wrong. The members of our party will challenge that wherever we find it and on every occasion.

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada—U.S.), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to take part in the debate on the Conservative motion that reads as follows:

That the House call on the government to take the appropriate measures to sell the 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel Airport.

Before getting to the substance of the motion and the reasons why I will not support it, I would like to give an historical overview of the whole situation and explain how we arrived at the decision to expropriate and then at the signing by the Conservative government and ADM of a long term lease transferring to ADM all the ownership rights.

I would like to put the development of Aéroports de Montréal into context in terms of its historical and geographic importance.

Supply

The Montreal airport known as Pierre Elliott Trudeau has been part of my riding since the last revision of the boundaries of our federal constituencies. The district that will soon become the municipality of Dorval is included in my riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine. So I know what it is to have an international airport in an urban setting, and I also know the problems it creates for the neighbours, all those people who live in the area.

Historically, Montreal has always been a gateway to North America. First, by sea, then by roads, rail and finally air. Montreal's history is intimately tied to transportation and business development. Located near the mouth of the St. Lawrence Seaway, where the Richelieu River and the Ottawa River meet, Montreal has become a passenger transportation and business hub in North America.

As the continent developed, Montreal reinforced its position as a transportation hub. Montreal has always been and will remain a link between North America and the rest of the world.

The climate after the Second World War fostered Montreal's accelerated development. The city's geographic location, technological progress, industrialization and government policies helped heighten development. This situation eventually resulted in air traffic volume that surpassed the needs of the city and it became a transcontinental transportation hub.

Commercial aviation in Montreal therefore follows this tradition of international trade. Airlines from all over the world have made it one of their key destinations. Let us not forget that commercial aviation is essential to tourist, industrial and service companies.

To understand the situation at Mirabel, the evolution of aviation in Canada must first be explained. In the 1950s, piston aircrafts like the Constellation and the DC-7, were used for almost all links between Europe and North America.

● (1230)

The first transatlantic crossings were made only after the DC-8 and the Boeing 707 were introduced. We were entering a new era in the world of transportation

In the 1950s, the governments of the time studied the future needs of the Montreal area in terms of air transportation. They concluded at the time that a new international airport was needed in Montreal.

This conclusion was mainly based on information collected through a study conducted shortly before Expo 67. This study revealed that the more long-term needs necessitated the construction of a new international airport. Forecasts at the time indicated that at that pace, despite the expansion projects, the Dorval airport, now known as Pierre Elliott Trudeau, would reach another saturation point around 1985. A new airport was the conclusive solution proposed by this study in order to meet the future needs of the city.

Supply

Sainte-Scholastique, which at that time was made up of 14 cities and villages that were later merged to form one municipality called Mirabel, was chosen as the location for the new airport. Construction of the airport started in June 1970. Two 12,000-foot landing strips, taxiways, one terminal, one control tower and service buildings were built at a cost of \$350 million.

The airport opened on October 4, 1975. Mirabel is the last international airport of this size to be built.

The government of the time set its sights high for this project and a 98,000 acre area was reserved for the construction of this airport. The purpose of the buffer zone around the airport was to ensure that the airport's needs did not conflict with the urban development needs. Mirabel was built 45 minutes from downtown to allow this new airport to develop without disturbing the neighbouring population.

Shortly after Mirabel commenced operations, some major events rattled the aviation field. Considered a technological wonder, the Boeing 747, which was highly popular among airlines, significantly affected air transport around the world. As a result, it became more difficult for some destinations to make a profit on this aircraft in light of the low passenger volume and the required infrastructure.

Air carriers also reviewed their operations and eliminated long-haul flights with stopovers, giving preference to longer direct flights. With a view to profitability, air carriers concentrated their flights in airports that were likely to attract the most traffic.

Later, the liberalization of air transport to the United States also had major repercussions, depriving Montreal of significant domestic traffic. Air carriers could no longer serve the United States by extending their service to Montreal. To remain competitive, carriers eliminated stopovers like Montreal.

The economic conditions of the 1990s also had a significant impact for a number of international air carriers. The events of September 11, 2001 also contributed to the upheaval in global aviation. In Canada, these major upheavals translated into the merger, closing or downsizing of a number of national and international air carriers and noticeably slowed down this sector of our economy.

For example, in the first quarter of 2002, the number of passenger flight departures at Mirabel alone dropped from 94 to 56 a week. ADM therefore made the necessary decisions in this context in order to maximize profits in airport facilities and provide sound management.

• (1235)

Let us get back to the past. In 1985, as a result of changes in the aviation industry and at Mirabel, the Treasury Board approved the terms and conditions of a program to resell 80,000 acres of excess land and the implementation of an agricultural renewal program.

In 1988, 784 acres of expropriated land was added to the 80,000 acres. Then, 11,000 acres of airport reserve land was leased long term and an agricultural renewal program was offered to the lessees.

A special committee was set up to establish the terms and conditions of the lease program and the agricultural renewal

program. This committee recommended that a 20-year lease be signed, with the option to renew for consecutive 5-year periods until these lands are required for airport needs.

Finally, in 1992, the management of the airports was transferred to the société des Aéroports de Montréal, known as ADM. This helped establish a framework, which clearly defined the federal government's role in airport management.

As an aside, I would remind the House that this motion was put forward by the Conservative Party, with the support of the Bloc. This is an unhealthy alliance in my view. However, what the Conservative Party is not saying is that it is the Conservative government that transferred the management of the airports to the société des Aéroports de Montréal in 1992.

It is the Conservative government that signed the lease with ADM, transferring ownership of the land at issue to the corporation. ADM was given full management responsibility. It is therefore solely responsible for independently providing financial and operational management of Montréal Trudeau and Mirabel airports. ADM alone manages the 131 leases for the lands for which it is responsible and it also has exclusive authority to make decisions regarding the current and future uses of these lands. I repeat ADM has exclusive authority.

For its part, as owner of these airports, the federal government ensures the long term integrity and viability of the national airport network.

The government's role is in line with the national airport policy implemented in July 1994, which provides local groups with the opportunity to become owners and operators. This policy enables communities that take ownership of airport facilities to profit further from their airports, adapt the level of service to local needs and attract new and different kinds of businesses.

Transport Canada, through its role as a regulator, ensures the safety of the travelling public and contributes to the enhancement of airport facilities. This is the true role of government.

I mentioned earlier that, in my mind, the fact that the Bloc supports the Conservative motion constitutes an unhealthy alliance. Why do I say this?

• (1240)

First, I say this because there is a lease. Yesterday evening, in our emergency debate on the situation in Ukraine, several members of this House mentioned that the rule of law must be respected. Several members also said that the Supreme Court of Ukraine should look into the election irregularity and the decision announced by the central election commission in Ukraine. Election results seem to indicate that the winner was the Prime Minister, and not his opponent, results which are obviously being challenged by the Ukrainian people.

Now, today, Conservative and Bloc members are telling us to flout the law and to ignore the lease. While criticizing the government for having expropriated too much land, they suggest that we flout the law, terminate the lease and sell the land back. The member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel even had the gall to say, “If ever, to develop Mirabel, ADM needed more land, all the government would have to do is to expropriate again”. What nonsense.

The opposition criticized us because land was expropriated. It wants us to sell the 11,000 acres back to the farmers who are operating and cultivating these 11,000 acres under the terms and conditions of legal leases. Now, it is telling us to terminate ADM's lease and sell the land back. Moreover, the Bloc Québécois adds, “If the government finds out it made a mistake, that is no problem. All it has to do is to is expropriate again”. What nonsense, and how dishonest.

They could at least be logical. If it was not appropriate to expropriate in the first place, they should chose carefully the solutions they propose and make sure the mistake they claim was made then not be made again.

Also, in his remarks on this motion, the Minister of Transport clearly stated that calls for proposals were launched by ADM for development projects, major economic development plans, in the area. ADM received some 30 proposals. Following prequalification, four companies were asked to develop detailed plans. These plans could involve thousands of jobs. Bombardier could eventually be interested in this.

But the Bloc Québécois, which always claims that it alone can represent the interests of Quebec, is ignoring all that. It prefers to engage in petty politics with the Conservatives on this issue. That is a shame and a scandal.

• (1245)

[English]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must say to the member opposite that I enjoyed her history lesson. The background to this topic was obviously very clear. I think we understand that.

The problem comes when she starts to talk about unholy alliances between political parties in the House. It has been made very clear that this side of the House, and hopefully some on her side, would agree that we will support each other when it is appropriate to do so. In this case, if the Bloc finds it is appropriate to support us, I think that Canadians will welcome that.

The issue that we have brought forward asks that land be returned to the rightful owners. The rightful owners were those people who had the land expropriated from them 30 some odd years ago for needs that are now no longer existent.

The minister has talked about whether or not the lands need to be retained for future industrial use. I would suggest to members that when weather forecasters are out in 30 years of forecasting weather, and in this case their forecast for the land that they required was wrong. People say they were wrong and move on.

We have had 30 years to find a use for the land and we have not found it. The minister talks about the possibility in the next few

Supply

months, and perhaps not. The next issue is whether or not we can return the land because we have a lease on it. It has either got to be one or the other. If we have a lease on the land, after all who owns ADM? Leases have been bought and sold in the past. The rightful thing to do is to return the land to those people from whom it was unnecessarily expropriated.

I would like to hear the member justify why we want to retain that land for the future for goodness knows what reason.

Hon. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. member asked me and in fact criticized me for daring to say that this is an unholy alliance between the Conservative Party and the Bloc. It was a statement made in this House and I will respond to that statement.

I find it interesting that only last week the deputy leader of the Conservatives accused the government of working secretly with the Bloc. In Sunday's Halifax *Herald* the member for Central Nova attacked the Liberals for voting with the Bloc to defeat the Conservative supply day motion on offshore oil.

It is quite interesting that the member would take issue with what I had to say. I find it interesting as well that the deputy leader of the Conservatives could not respect his own word, a signed agreement. However, on the other hand, it is not surprising that the Conservative Party deputy leader, who is unable to respect a written, signed agreement, would call on the government to not respect the law. It is not surprising after all, the more that I think of it. Shame on the Conservatives. We are a society of the rule of law. Shame on the Conservatives. Shame on the deputy leader of the Conservative Party.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, asking a question of the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine is always a little strange. When we know that a part of Dorval Airport is located in her riding and how this whole sector of Montreal island always wanted to cannibalize Mirabel, it is quite strange today that she would defend what she did not defend in the past.

She has probably decided to speak out today because, when someone hurts another person too much, he or she tries to show a little compassion. This is what we can feel today. The government is trying to tell us that it must keep the 11,000 acres when it knows very well that, out of the 17,000 acres, 6,000 are inside the fences. This is twice the area of Dorval.

As far as I know, there is still a possibility of developing Dorval. This is why \$1.1 billion was invested in the last two years. Otherwise, ADM would have been a bad manager. I will not tell you what I think about ADM's management; perhaps I will have the opportunity to do so on another occasion in this House.

I would tell the member that, in any case, ADM was the first airport authority that was established. The Liberals liked it so much that they adopted it for the other airports in Canada. As I said earlier in my speech, I am not sure that the Conservatives are proud of the creation of airport authorities.

Supply

What I ask the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, since they did enough to Mirabel, is to have a little compassion, to sell back the 11,000 acres of land and to vote with us. That is the least she could do.

• (1250)

Hon. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I find it curious that the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel had the gall to say earlier, during the debate on this motion, that we should terminate the lease with ADM, sell back the land to the farmers and, if we are mistaken about the needs of Mirabel airport and economic development, the government would simply have to expropriate again. That is some way for the member to show compassion.

The member has the gall to accuse me of having no compassion, while, in the same breath, he talks about selling the land back, terminating the lease and flouting the law. He says that we should have no problem with that and that if we are wrong we simply have to expropriate again. Nice solution.

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member opposite deals with a statement she made in trying to draw an analogy between the recent Ukraine election and the lease agreement signed by the government.

Being a Ukrainian Canadian, number one, I take a little bit of offence to that, but I also want to suggest that the hon. member has it a little backward. The member opposite and her party were the ones who stood in the House yesterday with every one of us and said that we will reject the results of that Ukrainian election. Why? Because we knew it was wrong.

This is the same. This deal was wrong. We need to right a wrong. Why the double standard? Why does that member say that we can right a wrong in Ukraine, but we cannot right a wrong for farmers in Quebec?

Hon. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, once again members of the Conservative Party show how they take only certain things that were said and do not present the entire thing.

I clearly stated, when I talked about what happened in Ukraine, that the supreme court of Ukraine under the constitution has the legal authority to examine complaints about the election process and to determine whether or not that election process was legal. That is the rule of law. If that supreme court is unable to render an impartial decision that is based on the rule of law, then we have a failed society and a failed democracy.

My point was to state that we have a rule of law in this country. What the Conservative Party, in unholy alliance with the Bloc, is suggesting is that we violate the rule of law, that we break a legally negotiated and agreed upon lease which was signed by a Conservative minister.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Just do what is right.

Hon. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, ADM has offered not once but several times to extend the leases that it has with the farmers until the end of its own lease with the federal government. It would allow ADM to determine exactly what are the needs of Mirabel in view of future development. Also, it would allow the use on an agricultural

basis to continue on those lots. Unfortunately, Union des producteurs agricoles has rejected that offer.

• (1255)

Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Nepean—Carleton.

Before I address the substance of the Conservative motion that we are debating in the House today, as the agriculture and agri-food critic for the official opposition, I would like to take this opportunity to honour the men and women of this country who, day after day, work tirelessly to produce and process the food that we eat.

The value of the work of these men and women not only often gets ignored, but to add insult to injury, over the last few decades numerous levels of government have made life for producers on the farm more and more difficult. Whether it be through burdensome regulations, misguided legislation, flawed assistance programs, or simply being completely ignored in times of crisis, Canadian producers and farm families have suffered greatly at the hands of the Liberal government.

In spite of the Liberal government's legacy of disrespect for the agriculture community, Canadian producers and processors continue to produce the world's greatest and safest food supply.

In spite of being largely ignored during the current BSE crisis, cattle and livestock producers continue to press on with a resilience and a determination to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

In my riding alone, many producers with whom I have spoken and visited have conveyed to me their increasing frustration with the bureaucratic and regulatory nonsense that they have to endure at the hands of the Liberal government's gross mismanagement of the agricultural file.

Agricultural producers have a unique and demonstrable relationship with the lands they own and farm. For many farmers the lands that they own have been passed on to them by their ancestors, dating back several generations. This passing on of the family farm from generation to generation has long been the reality for many farm families. Unfortunately, due to the lack of support and respect that the Liberal government affords to Canadian farm families, the dream of passing on the family farm to the next generation is fading for all too many Canadian farm families.

To have this dream shattered by government mismanagement and poor public policy is a wrong that needs to be addressed by the Liberal government. Canadian farm families deserve respect from all levels of government. Rural issues continue to be ignored by the Liberal government. My constituents are tired of hearing of the Liberal urban agenda and gas tax for cities. They demand better from their government.

My constituents demand a government that will be responsive to, and dare I say this, the rural agenda. It is this lack of attention to rural Canadians that has led to the increasing polarization of rural and urban Canada. That is a shame.

Supply

To address the subject of our motion today, a prime example of Liberal mismanagement and disrespect of the agriculture community is evidenced by the situation that Quebec farmers had to face when their farmlands were expropriated by the Liberal government for Mirabel.

Before I go on, I find it highly ironic that Mirabel airport was in large part the baby of the former prime minister, the right hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In spite of this, it is the height of irony that the other airport in Montreal currently bears his name. Perhaps this was the Liberal Party's attempt to hide the legacy of the former prime minister who gave birth to the Mirabel white elephant, but I digress.

There is a common principle of justice in this country. It is called making amends for past wrongs. For example, the Liberal government recognizes the need to right past wrongs that the federal government has unjustly imposed upon Canada's aboriginal peoples. In so doing, the government is doing the right thing.

With regard to the injustices suffered by Canadian hepatitis C victims at the hands of the Liberals, the government recently agreed to compensate them. In this regard, I would like to commend my hon. colleagues in the Conservative Party who have been unrelenting in their pursuit of justice for those hepatitis C victims. Principally, I would like to commend our health critic, the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia; the Conservative member for Yellowhead; and the former member for Macleod, Dr. Grant Hill, for their tireless work for justice in this regard.

The Liberal government's capitulation on the hepatitis C compensation issue was the right thing to do. We in the Conservative Party applaud the government for its recent actions in this regard, however overdue its response may have been. Nonetheless, the Liberals continue to stall on other files where they so clearly made poor policy and poor management decisions.

It is no secret that the Liberals told Canadians to trust them with the gun registry. They said it would only cost taxpayers \$2 million. We know that the Liberals were never good at math and that their projections for the total cost of the gun registry were off the mark by only a couple of billion dollars.

The Liberals should be ashamed for having treated the public purse with such disregard and disrespect. On behalf of my constituents, I demand that the Liberal government acknowledge its complete and utter mismanagement of the gun registry, do the right thing, and scrap it altogether.

• (1300)

Turning to the matter that we are debating in the House today, the incredible sense of attachment and belonging to the land that farmers feel is precisely what makes what happened at Mirabel such a disgrace. To have displaced 3,200 farm families from their land to the tune of 97,000 acres, an area equivalent to two-thirds of the city of Montreal, is beyond comprehension.

This mass expropriation displaced almost 12,000 people. Much of this displacement occurred through force. Many houses were torn down, stores were displaced and families were thrown out. The Department of Transport virtually wiped out the economic life of 10 villages. Former owners were asked to lease their own heritage for indeterminate periods.

To highlight the complete and utter mismanagement of the Liberals on this file, of the 97,000 acres expropriated for the purposes of the airport, Mirabel never used more than 5,000 acres for its airport operations. That is less than 5% of the total area expropriated.

It was not until a Conservative government was in power that the wrongs inflicted by the Liberal government on these farm families were largely addressed. In the 1980s, 80,000 acres of the original 97,000 acres were ceded back to their original owners. This was thanks in large part to the hard work of Conservative MP Lise Bourgault and the support of the then minister of public works, Roch LaSalle.

[*Translation*]

We are again caught in a situation that proves once again how poorly the Liberals manage public funds. Mirabel airport is a white elephant, a monument to Liberal arrogance, waste and mismanagement.

The farming families living in the area want to turn the page and go back to a normal life. It is high time the Liberal government take responsibility for this white elephant and apologize to the families that were so badly treated throughout this entire matter.

So unless the Liberal government can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is necessary to keep the 11,000 acres of unused land in Mirabel, it should give them back to the farmers.

On this side of the House, we understand the suffering of these people and we feel for them. I hope that the Liberal government will recognize its wrongdoing, take responsibility and make amends.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to go into a little more detail about how devastating this expropriation of land has been to the government and how it has affected these farm families.

I know from my experience as a farmer that it is very difficult to borrow money when a large portion of one's acreage is leased. I want to know how reversing a bad decision that the government has made by making sure that the land goes back to the producers would improve their situation with agricultural lenders and their general farm operations.

• (1305)

Ms. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, without a doubt any time there is disruption it is the cause of great problems for the farm family. Lives are upset and new sources of income have to be found. If in fact they get to keep part of their land, often it is disrupted by roads going through it which prevents the efficient operation of a farm.

It is really a shame that this had to be done. Twelve thousand people's lives were disrupted and for what? So that the government could use less than 5% of the land that was expropriated. It is totally unacceptable that so many families had to suffer.

Supply

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to ask this question of the previous Liberal speaker, but maybe I can ask my colleague. In her comments she was discussing this unholy alliance between the Conservative members and the Bloc and was really fixated on that. That is intriguing because the Minister of Transport was a founding member of the Bloc and is now taking the lead for the government on this file. I find it difficult to comprehend in terms of the Liberal strategy.

I would ask her to talk about this unholy alliance because I think that here in Parliament we are supposed to work for the betterment of all Canadians and we have shown some good movement on that. I think this is a case where we could actually have some progression. I would ask her to comment on that.

Ms. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I think there is always every opportunity for progress if we do work together. Unholy alliances are merely names that are given to things. In fact, much of this country has been built through alliances that have benefited the entire country.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on all of these issues it is important to remember, as the hon. member across the way pointed out, the need for us all to work together to advance the interests of all Canadians.

In so doing, I would like very briefly to mention on behalf of all parliamentarians our congratulations to the 10 finalists in the As Prime Minister Awards, who were just congratulated here in the House, in the Parliament of Canada, and who have succeeded in bringing forward terrific new ideas for the future of our country. They are: Ashley Androsoff, Paul Beaudry, Sean Keating, Jason MacLean, Alim Morali, Yongxin Quan, Cameron Sabadoz, Juda Strawczynski, Tian White, and Wendy Yu.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to congratulate the member for Vaughan—King—Aurora for creating this opportunity for young people to contribute their ideas and make proposals for improving our country.

[*English*]

We have before us a very important motion.

[*Translation*]

This motion shows that the Conservative Party is the only party that defends the interests of all Quebecers. Quite obviously, the Minister of Transport has forgotten his province. It is also true that all parties here are working together to find a just solution for the farmers. It is really sad and unfortunate that the Liberals do not want to cooperate with us to solve this real problem. They have elected to be totally partisan and to place their partisan interests ahead of those of Quebecers.

I am proud to be here as a Conservative.

[*English*]

Let us review this situation. We have farmers who have had their property expropriated by the Liberal government to propel forward a boondoggle, a massive waste of taxpayers' money and what has turned out to be a complete failure. This of course is the result of the tradition of waste and mismanagement in this Liberal government.

Today we propose, in working with our opposition colleagues, to bring justice to this file, to redress the injustice that has been done to the farmers of Quebec around the Mirabel airport, the farmers whose land was expropriated and who now would like to restore their way of life.

But there is a broader question at work here.

● (1310)

[*Translation*]

The Liberal government has abandoned the interests of Quebec, and those of the farmers, too.

[*English*]

They are against the interests of farmers and this is a prime example: their failure to acknowledge the essential nature of property rights.

Property rights are a core principle of human liberty and that party across the way has continuously denied that right. It runs to the very core of any free and democratic society that if any man or woman works to cultivate and then enjoy the ownership of property, that right is inalienable. That right ought to be protected. It is the core of any free society that we should have property rights. The government thoughtlessly abandoned that key principle of a democratic society when it expropriated this land in the first place.

Where do we go from here? The Conservative Party has put forward a motion which would redress this egregious injustice and allow the land to be sold back to those from whom it was expropriated and those who wish to buy it back.

Of course the Liberals cannot support this motion for political reasons, because to do so they would have to admit that they were wrong in the first place by expropriating it. And of course they will not admit they are wrong. They never do.

They did not admit they were wrong when they lost a quarter of a billion dollars in the ad scam. They did not admit they were wrong when they harassed farmers and sports people with a \$2 billion gun registry that cost taxpayers a thousand times more than it was supposed to. They did not admit they were wrong then. They did not admit they were wrong when a billion dollars went missing at the HRDC department. It was a massive HRDC boondoggle. They did not admit they were wrong then.

I see that some hon. members are so afraid to admit they are wrong that they would rather escape from the problem all together.

That is why I am proud of the fact that we are working with other opposition members on this motion. I do not hesitate for a second to say, "Yes, there are other opposition parties that support this motion because it reflects the interests of both farmers and Quebecers and ultimately Canadians".

It is also interesting that the transport minister, one of the founding members of the separatist Bloc, would stand in the House and allege an unholy alliance merely because the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party, along with the NDP, are supporting the same motion. In fact, the only thing unholy is his party's utter disdain for property rights, for basic decency, for honesty and for redressing what has been a terrible injustice to these farmers.

This evening I will be speaking to a group of farmers in my own constituency. The Ottawa Federation of Agriculture has invited my leader, with me, to address their concerns. They are angry that the Liberal government refuses to support their aims to reopen the border to live Canadian cattle. They are angry that the government has not sufficiently defended the system of supply management that keeps their quality of life in place. They are angry that while commodity prices go up, taxes continue to go up and the Liberal government seems to have no interest and no agenda for rural communities.

That is why the Conservative Party will go to them with a real rural agenda to support the aims and goals of supply management, to fight to get our borders open through strong bilateral relationships with our most important trading partner, to scrap that billion dollar boondoggle, the gun registry, and divert those dollars into security so that we can really protect the way of life and the public safety of our people.

We are going to be fighting for farmers tonight at that meeting. I wish some Liberals would come along to fight for farmers, but unfortunately there are none across the way who have any interest in doing so.

That brings us back to this motion. Farmers who had their property expropriated now merely wish to have the right to repurchase it at a fair value to resume the way of life that was so terribly interrupted by the interference of the Liberal government and its predecessor Liberal governments.

We see that there is no sympathy for those farmers on that side of the House. Earlier today one of my colleagues asked the transport minister why he never speaks of the farmers whose land was expropriated. He speaks of all of the great things he wants to do with the property, all the grand schemes he has. Why does he never address the plight of the farmers who were displaced from their way of life? He stood in response to that question and he continued to avoid that question.

• (1315)

This government has never acknowledged the suffering it caused, the families that were torn apart, the businesses that shut down, even the deaths that were caused because of the immense burden of stress forced on people after they learned that their way of life would be tragically and brutally interrupted.

We have a chance to begin to right that wrong. I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, to join with all of us as we attempt to redress the wrong that was done.

We have here a motion that unites all the opposition parties to redress that problem. In fact, in one moment of non-partisanship, I ask that someone on that side of the floor stand and reveal to us that they will change their position and they will support this motion, they will admit they were wrong and they will right this injustice.

Mr. Speaker, I—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with attention to the hon. member. He said in his

Supply

speech how his party was in favour of rural Canada or some such; I acknowledge I am paraphrasing, but that is roughly what he said.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Boudria: If they want to say that he was not saying that he was supporting rural Canada, then perhaps I will have to reword my question. Be that as it may, I do believe he said in his remarks that he was and that his party was. This really forces me to ask the next question because of an incident that occurred not that long ago.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, because you are an extremely knowledgeable person being the non-partisan individual that you are, you will recall that a tremendously successful program for the economic development of eastern Ontario was announced lately.

In that announcement of a program, a program that had been founded by the Reeves and Wardens of eastern Ontario, adopted by the government, put in place and enacted, the member for the then riding of Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington in rural eastern Ontario criticized the program, said that it should not have occurred and was called to task by one of the wardens in his constituency. Similarly, the Conservative member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry did the same thing and he too was chastised by his constituents.

Therefore, I want to ask the member, in light of what he says, can I assume that his party is now on the side of rural Canadians or is his party still on the side of what the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and the member for Lanark said the other day? We would like to know which it is and rural Canadians really want to know.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his intervention, crafty as always. I do note that the hon. member changed the subject dramatically. Is it not interesting how he did that?

I wonder if other members in the room noticed that. I see some heads nodding. When I asked someone on that side of the House to stand and acknowledge the pain and suffering that his Liberals caused, the only response he could give was that there is a program to dispense Liberal handouts, which he alleges does not have support from other parties. Wow: what an amazing leap from one subject to another. That, I would suggest, is a fairly breathtaking accomplishment, that he could make such a rhetorical jump from one point to another. I think I am praising the hon. member too much, but the point is that it is very impressive that he could make that linkage.

We stand for rural Canada and let me tell the hon. member how. We stand for rural Canada. We will scrap the gun registry that seeks to make criminals out of farmers. We will fight to get our borders open and we will stop insulting the biggest consumer of Canadian beef. We will defend the interests of agricultural industries that are protected by supply management. And we will step up to the table and find real solutions to the trade problems that western farmers as well have when they try to export their products.

We will fight for rural Canada as we always have and we urge the hon. member across the way to change his position and do the same thing.

Supply

• (1320)

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased of the new position vis-à-vis rural Canada of the hon. member. The people of rural eastern Ontario, particularly the wardens and mayors will appreciate that. I hope that they get the respect in the future that they deserve rather than the criticism of his two colleagues of a few weeks ago.

I want to get to my next question about Mirabel. As the hon. member will know, I represent the constituency adjacent to the Mirabel constituency. I have a large number of constituents who work there. It is very important to the economy of my constituency as it is for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

Does he not believe that the process that the administration of Aéroports de Montréal has put in place, waiting for these proposals for the future of Mirabel, should be concluded?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the first time, the hon. member engaged in a fit of rhetorical gymnastics that took him to an entirely different subject. This time, he is trying to distract from the issue by engaging in an administrative distraction.

We believe that all of these processes can be worked through in a justifiable and workable fashion, but, at the same time, the hon. member ought to recognize that these farmers deserve to get their way of life back. For him to use bureaucratic obstacles as a reason to stop that from happening is really disappointing.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the motion before us this afternoon. I want to thank the Conservatives for giving us the opportunity to debate this very important issue. I have the feeling they may have taken their cue from the motion we will be debating this afternoon at the Standing Committee on Transport. I would assume that they will support us, that the NDP will support us and that perhaps some members from the Liberal Party will show some openness.

It is important to go over some of the past events so that they are fresh in our minds. The chronology is simple, but the result is tragic. We must remember these events to prevent history from being repeated, although some would like to forget them because there was such incalculable loss.

There is the political debate and the economic debate, but most importantly there is the emotional debate when it comes to the saga of Mirabel airport, which my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel explained very well.

Think about the loss of some of the most fertile land in Quebec. Think about the loss of this unique heritage. The human cost was enormous. Farms were completely demolished or burned, businesses were destroyed and hopes were dashed.

More than 3,000 families were affected and more than 10,000 people expropriated, uprooted from their family farms. That is the emotional debate, the practically irreparable human tragedy that, today, the Minister of Transport still refuses to acknowledge.

What happened was this. In March 1969, the federal government announced its intention to build the new Montreal international

airport, better known as Mirabel. To carry out its project, the government decided to expropriate 97,000 acres of the best crop land in Quebec. That is when the tragedy began, but it did not stop there.

This was the largest expropriation Canada has ever seen. This project was 10 times larger than any of the world's largest airports, 27 times larger than the area covered by Dorval airport. The government expropriated nearly 20 times more land than necessary—an area bigger than Laval. We call that thinking big. If I were speaking to my children, I would say that their eyes are bigger than their belly.

On October 4, 1975, the new airport opened for business. The Liberal government under Pierre-Elliott Trudeau opened Mirabel airport with great pomp and ceremony. I did not hear his speech because I was still quite young, but I have seen the black and white reruns. Today when I listened to the Minister of Transport, I thought Mr. Trudeau was back among us.

At the time, Mr. Trudeau called Mirabel the project of the century. He said that traffic would rapidly grow to 4, 6 or 10 million passengers, and be multiplied by 6 in 50 years. We are far short of this total and today we might call it the fiasco of the century instead. History confirms this.

On February 20, 1996, ADM announced the transfer of international passenger flights from Mirabel to Dorval. On October 31, 2004, the last passenger flight landed at Mirabel, in total disarray.

Why is it that we have seen the closing of the only airport of international stature, an able competitor with Pearson in Toronto? Why has the eastern door to North America been shut although it could have guaranteed Quebec a first-row place on the international stage?

History teaches us that decisions made in Ottawa, since 1970, are behind the current situation. Once again, another scandal, caused by poor management by the Liberals. October 2004 marked the sad finale to what ought to have been a hub of eastern North America's air traffic. We can call this saga a monumental fiasco, a shameless waste of public funds, decisions that made a major disservice to Quebec, especially to the people of Mirabel, to farmers and others who believed in their region's development, to business people who believed in the economic development of Quebec.

Many decisions led to this economic disaster. For example, if the federal government had been consistent with its decision to invest in Mirabel, it would not have given a systematic advantage to Toronto over Montreal, since it is the federal government that grants landing privileges to international airlines.

Passengers in eastern Canada find themselves in the deplorable position of having to change planes in Toronto to get to Europe even though Montreal is better situated, geographically, to serve this region.

• (1325)

The result of this situation is that everyone loses, including travellers and Quebec's economy.

Supply

If the federal government had followed up on its plan, it would have completed the Mirabel project to make it fully competitive. For example, it would have completed the infrastructures that were essential to the airport's development, namely highways 13 and 50, and the railway link with Montreal. But it did not do so. In fact, it did not do anything.

However, this year, the federal government injected over \$200 million to build an air-rail link in Toronto. This does not make any sense; it is so inconsistent. On the one hand, the government invests millions of dollars in the development of a new international airport in Montreal, while on the other hand it gives to an airport in Toronto the international flights and the necessary infrastructures, in other words all the means necessary to expand its operations. The government is giving to Toronto everything that Mirabel needed to develop and protect its future.

The government will soon be put to the test, since the new Minister of Transport recently talked about the importance of having a direct link with Dorval. I hope that, this time, he will realize that a project cannot achieve its full economic development if it remains incomplete.

I just presented a sad account of past events. Let us now look to the future, because I am fundamentally a positive person and my philosophy is that we should learn from past mistakes to grow and avoid repeating those mistakes again. Let us talk about the future, about hope and about concrete measures to give back to those farmers and owners who were expropriated in Mirabel interesting and lasting future prospects.

Today's motion is critical for farmers and for those who were expropriated and who want to get back the 11,000 acres of land that were expropriated in excess of what was needed. This land is currently being leased until the year 2023, but its development is jeopardized by the temporary nature of the rights of the farmers who are using it. It is difficult for them to convince financial institutions to lend them money to invest in their facilities. Moreover, these farmers are reluctant to undertake expensive projects to improve the land, since they do not know how long they will be able to use it.

If the government wants to take an initial concrete measure for its new chapter, as the Minister of Transport so aptly put it, I already have a title to suggest to him: "Correcting Past Mistakes and Returning the Land to Mirabel Farmers". The minister has an opportunity to make history, to do things differently from his predecessors. I am anxious to see what he will do.

The Bloc Québécois has asked a lot of questions in the House on this very subject and, every time, the Minister of Transport and his parliamentary secretary mentioned a lease between the Government of Canada and ADM. Again today in the House, the Minister of Transport mentioned the lease. However my colleague for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel explained very well all the facts regarding these leases. As he said, it is totally irresponsible on the part of the government to hide behind these leases and claim it is impossible to agree on new terms and conditions.

It is important to note that 17,000 acres still belong to the federal government. The expropriates are demanding the return of 11,000 of these acres for agriculture. So, that leaves 6,000 acres for Mirabel to

use and for any future development. Just to reassure the Minister of Transport, 6,000 acres, that is twice the size of Dorval. So, the return of that land would not affect potential industrial and aeronautical development at Mirabel and would not jeopardize the future of Mirabel as an industrial park.

• (1330)

The government should recognize that, in its delusion of grandeur, it expropriated far too much land and it still has a lot of room to manoeuvre in the future. It can commit to returning the 11,000 acres of agricultural land farmers are asking for without affecting the potential development of Mirabel since, even if the airport was operating at full capacity, which is not the case, these 6,000 acres would be enough to meet its needs.

The Minister of Transport did not convince me with his long speech. Returning the land to farmers does not mean closing Mirabel for ever. On the contrary. It will not prevent development nor will it prevent Bombardier from developing.

If the minister wants to talk about Bombardier, let us talk about Bombardier. However, we should also talk about aerospace policy. As a matter of fact, the Bloc Québécois put forward a motion in this House asking the government to develop an aerospace policy. And what has the Minister of Transport done? We are still waiting for it. The whole industry is still waiting for it. The minister missed yet another opportunity. When the minister talks about development, he must look at the bigger picture and not be shortsighted as in the case of Mirabel.

Over and above today's motion, I would also like to remind hon. members of the importance of preserving what has been achieved as well as keeping all options open, among other things by keeping the present Mirabel facilities in proper condition. This time, the government needs to keep its promises. We remember the promise about keeping charter flights at Mirabel, yet now they are flying out of Dorval. That is why we need a formal commitment to keep the Mirabel facilities in proper condition, and also to keep cargo flights there, not transferred to Dorval.

My final point is the importance of having an international trade zone. If the Minister of Transport really wants to contribute to the development of Mirabel Airport—and we will be needing some proof of that—he ought to convince his government of the importance of putting in place some simplified regulations on customs duty and sales tax exemption or deferment for companies using Mirabel in order to develop its full potential in an industrial and cargo-only context.

Hon. members will recall that, in 2000, the Government of Quebec implemented an international trade zone at Mirabel in order to take advantage of the airport's presence and step up the economic development of the Lower Laurentians region. The federal government has never supported this initiative, despite its effectiveness and its job-generating potential.

The cargo-only vocation of Mirabel must be supported by reinforcing the Mirabel international trade zone, making it an international-calibre industrial park with special regulatory zones.

Supply

A significant federal indication in favour of the international trade zone will be one way of reducing the negative impact of the transfer and the fundamental errors committed by the federal government in the past. Moreover, on March 5 this year, the Prime Minister made a statement in my riding, in Longueuil, that he was in favour of tax-free zones. I invite him to put his money where his mouth is.

To conclude, it is very important to keep in mind that returning the 11,000 acres to their owners will not in any way affect the development of Mirabel's aerospace potential. These are two completely different things. I hope that, at the end of the day, the minister will at least have moved in that direction and understood at least that part of the debate.

For the Bloc Québécois, the future of Mirabel is just as important as showing respect to the farmers and former expropriated property owners of Mirabel. That is why we are in favour of an approach that will be a response to the imperatives and interests of all parties.

First and foremost, however, the federal government must, if not make apologies, at least remedy its past errors and sell back the surplus expropriated land. As far as the future is concerned, the federal government now needs to ensure that Mirabel develops fully and to contribute to that development. It has a duty to do so.

• (1335)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher on her excellent speech. She made it quite clear that we will not compromise the development of the aerospace industry in Mirabel. These 6,000 acres have nothing to do with the 11,000 acres that we are talking about.

It is important to mention this to those who are listening. This morning, the minister had a tendency to try and mix everybody up and suggest that if the 11,000 acres were to be sold back, this would compromise the whole Bombardier file, but this is not the case at all.

We have to understand what we are trying to protect in Mirabel. It is true that we like to say that Mirabel is a cargo airport. However, we know that there is presently some sort of a problem in the cargo sector in the sense that, for economic reasons, more and more cargo is being transported in passenger planes, thereby reducing the price of airline tickets.

It is true that Mirabel is an all-cargo airport, but 80% of that cargo is mail. Mirabel is mainly a mail courier airport. I am very happy that my colleague has said that it was essential to develop the cargo-only potential at Mirabel. We have to put pressure on the industry.

I would like her to give a brief overview of the situation and to explain what her interest is in seeing Mirabel's cargo-only potential developed and in keeping the 6,000 developed acres in operation. We all know that the 11,000 acres are a separate issue.

• (1340)

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my colleague for his question. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank him for the outstanding work that he has done. He is the member for the Argenteuil and Papineau regions, for also for Mirabel. For years, since he joined the Bloc Québécois, he has constantly stood for not only Mirabel Airport, but also for the people who live in that area. They are often forgotten. There is much talk

about Mirabel Airport and major economic development, because it has benefits for everyone. However, my colleague has also always raised the human issue of the farmers. I think that he deserves all our support for the wonderful work that he has done for the people in his riding.

As to his question, indeed, this is very important. To me, of course, today's motion is crucial. Huge errors have been made. We are unable to even get apologies from the government. Consequently, we are asking for the lands to be sold back. However, the government must also suggest some ideas. It has talked about an aerospace policy that we are still waiting for. Now, it must also talk about economic development, because it must not leave the region high and dry.

Of course, the minister proudly tells us that four projects are on the table. I challenge the minister to tell us about them, because even he does not have all the details. In fact, knowledge about these projects is limited to a group of people, which is dangerous, since it is the whole future of Quebec that will suffer if we do not become involved.

We want to be part of these projects. I am looking forward to my colleague always being interested in the future of Mirabel and the people who live there.

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher as well as my hon. colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

The party across the way does not seem to realize that it has lost the confidence of the majority of the population. It is stubbornly unyielding on the demands of Quebec in general, and in particular the riding affected by the Mirabel airport issue. It contends that the Conservative Party only has the support of the Bloc Québécois, when in fact it has the support of the majority of the House. The NDP also supports this position. The only party to stubbornly refuse to recognize that the people of Mirabel have been robbed is the governing party.

In that sense, I think that we are not just talking about the airport per se, but also about very fertile agricultural land. I think that Quebec has been deprived of agricultural production in the areas surrounding major centres that would need such production. Right now, we are importing from Ontario the production that we have lost.

I would ask my hon. colleague if she can confirm this.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Mr. Speaker, I will try not to show too much enthusiasm, but I do feel like answering yes. I thank my colleague for his question.

However, I would have expected, given the return of the Minister of Transport— he who often speaks of opportunism and who is above that, of course—a new way of looking at things. Indeed, I would have expected from him a new approach to politics.

Obviously, we are not of the same age, but I got into politics at the same age he was when he got into politics. However, I moved into politics because I wanted to do things differently and I feel I chose the right party.

Supply

The Minister of Transport has made several errors along the way and we cannot hold them against him. That being said, I would have expected that, as Minister of Transport, he might have felt like changing the world, repudiating what his predecessors had done and saying, "I will not be like that. I am going to apologize to the people of Mirabel and I will make some concrete proposals. I will sell back the lands to farmers because, in fact, a mistake was made".

No, sad to say, the Minister of Transport made the same speech that Pierre Elliott Trudeau made years ago. However, maybe because I have confidence in the future, one day the minister will change and will propose something different from his predecessors. We will see.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand to address what is a very important issue. I believe this is a great injustice, one that is old in a sense but one that is renewed because the government is refusing to step in now and right an old wrong.

I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that I am splitting my time with the member for Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

This is an issue that goes back 35 years, and it deals with Mirabel Airport. At that time, 97,000 acres of land was expropriated. When this was done originally, it was rammed through, it affected approximately 12,000 people and it was completely unnecessary. The government of the day completely miscalculated the amount of land it would need to set up Mirabel Airport, which was a disaster anyway. It was a huge white elephant, and to this very day, we are still finding out how much of a white elephant it really was. It got smaller and smaller, and now it only takes cargo.

The point that I am trying to make is the government expropriated a tremendous amount of land unnecessarily. Cabinet documents, which were revealed in the last little while, show that the government recognized a couple of years after the expropriation had taken place that it had made a huge mistake, but it decided to plough on anyway.

A number of issues flow from this. One of them is the complete disrespect for the thousands of people who the government threw off the land. It is a story of an abuse of the power to expropriate because the government did not take the time to think it through. The government of the day was completely ham-fisted in its approach to this. It did not use its powers carefully. People who did not have to leave the land were thrown off it anyway.

It is also a story of a complete lack of respect for the issue of property rights. This is an important part of our fundamental freedoms. Unfortunately, the government does not understand that. We see that reflected all the time in legislation. We saw that with the species at risk legislation where the government again took a very ham-fisted approach that would allow people to be forced off their own land, if somebody noticed some kind of endangered species on it. They would not be allowed to have access to that land and would receive no compensation for losing the enjoyment of it. We see this consistent pattern when it comes to the government and the issue of property rights.

Today this injustice continues. It was an injustice 35 years ago when the government threw thousands of people off the land. These people today are still in situations where there has been tremendous human suffering. These are ancestral lands, which people had owned for generations. They were thrown off them and in some cases were provided some very small compensation at the time.

Hon. Jean Lapierre: What did you do when you were in government?

Mr. Monte Solberg: My friend across the way, the transport minister, asked what did we do when we were in government. First, I was not in government, but tens of thousands of acres were returned to these people. What did the Liberal government do? Nothing. It has done absolutely nothing and it displays the contempt it has for people on the land. We see it all the time. It is an attitude that is so prevalent. On the issue of BSE and on the farm crisis in general, the government will be pushed eventually to do things, but it is always dragged kicking and screaming. It just does not get it. It has a complete lack of respect for people on the land.

• (1350)

I argue that this is even more fundamental than that. It goes to an arrogance that accompanies Liberal governments wherever they go. It goes beyond that. It goes to a lack of respect, again, for the issue of private property, something that is so fundamental to not only this country, but western civilization. It is important as a fundamental freedom. We cannot have freedom unless we can have the right to own property, to use and enjoy it. Unfortunately, the government routinely shows a complete disrespect for that fundamental right.

In this case, I know my leader was out talking with these farmers not very long ago. People have been protesting at Mirabel airport. I have to admit I was not very aware of this issue. However, when we dig into it we find out how fundamentally wrong it is. These people are now asking for their land back. They are not asking for it to be just handed back to them by the way. They want to buy the land back. This is land that the government will never use because the airport has continued to shrink. Now it is mostly a cargo airport.

However, that is not the point. The point is these people are willing to buy it back at fair market value. The government is refusing to listen to them. It is refusing to give them a fair hearing. This is where I think the government is perpetuating that injustice of 35 years ago. We have two injustices: what happened 35 years ago and what is happening today because the government will not listen and will not do what is right to help these people.

Farmers across the country need a break in a whole bunch of different ways. We have problems with getting beef and cattle across the border because of BSE. We have problems with trade disputes with durum wheat. We have all kinds of markets being shut down to us or we cannot get into because of unfair subsidization from other countries around the world and we are being pushed out of those markets. Commodity prices are falling.

S. O. 31

In this one instance, where the government has a way to directly help farmers, it just turns a blind eye. That is unforgivable. Liberals have a moral obligation to listen to what these people are saying, to hear them out and right a wrong. They have an obligation to say to them, when it comes to the use of the government's powers of expropriation in the future, that they will be much more careful, that there will be full compensation and that they will not use the ham-fisted approach that governments too often use when it comes to the power of expropriation. This is an issue that the government has an obligation to address today.

I am very happy to work with other parties in this House, whether it is the Bloc or the NDP who support us. In fact, the government transport minister is heckling me about being in bed with the Bloc. That member over there was a founding member of the Bloc Québécois. This is unbelievable hypocrisy.

Let me say that we are united, not only with other parties, but we are united with the farmers of the country to do what is right. I cannot believe the government across the way sits there and laughs this off. It is a serious issue. Natural justice decrees that the government has to address this issue. It has to do it right away. These people need to have the opportunity to purchase their land back at fair market value. There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it is what should be done. It is what is right.

• (1355)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member from Medicine Hat for that great presentation. Would he expand a bit more about the lack of compassion the government has shown for the farmers in the Mirabel area and how this has been devastating to their livelihood? Would the member explain how the farmers lack of an asset base has affected their overall farming capabilities?

Also would he expand upon the whole issue that the government put in place, of this great dream, and only used 5% of the land that was ever required to build that airport? It is only 5,000 acres, but that still makes it one of the biggest land based airports of virtual insignificance in the world. If we compare Mirabel with Los Angeles, Heathrow and Chicago, they are working on much smaller land bases and still have become major international airports.

If the hon. member would like to expand upon those issues, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues there. The land that was expropriated initially, is equivalent to about 17 or 18 sections of land. We are talking the size of a small country. It is unbelievable how much land they expropriated in the first place. The government has an obligation to at least apologize to the farmers who were thrown off their land.

My friend is right. If we are raised on a family farm, generation after generation and that is what we grow up loving and wanting to do, then our land is gone, what do we do? We cannot just go and launch ourselves into some new career somewhere.

This is a situation where these people have a long history on this parcel of land. Their homes were taken away from many of them. A whole village was basically torn down. The member across the way is denying this, but houses were burnt down so the fire department

could go and practice. There are many stories of personal lives that were absolutely ruined by this. There are many stories that I did not want to go into because they are personal tragedies. However, if we read the record, people's lives were ruined by this.

It bothers me when I see the government members across the way downplaying the significance of this. When they do, they are downplaying the significance of terrible personal tragedies.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is as committed to freedom and the fundamental rights of Canadians to property rights as I am.

I would like him to speak to the heavy-handedness of the Liberal government of the day, taking property away from farmers, who, in many cases, had purchased the land and had lived on the land for generations. For no valid reason, other than the political will of the government at the time, it took the land away. Liberals are so famous for grandiose schemes, these white elephants like the gun registry. They have wasted land on which people have grown up.

Could the hon. member enunciate the fact that the property rights of these people were so tragically dismissed by the government?

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, I heard the minister across the way make reference to the fact that property rights do not exist in the Charter of Rights. Property rights are natural rights. We do not need the charter to tell us that we have those rights. We are born with those rights. Those are universal human rights and they belong to everyone. The government should recognize that in legislation and give these people a chance to get their land back.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the remarks made earlier by the Minister of Transport, when he was passionately defending the interests of his party. Why is he not just as passionate when it comes to defending the interests of farmers, of Quebeckers and of all Canadians?

• (1400)

[English]

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I note the minister is from Quebec. Why would he not stand up for the people of Quebec, the people he purports to represent? It is a terrible indictment of that minister and that government. They have an obligation to stand up for their people.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

GENOME CANADA

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week members had the pleasure of witnessing a great achievement in Canadian R and D during an exhibit of genomics for MPs and senators right here in the Centre Block.

Let us consider these facts. In four years Canada has been able to reclaim world recognition and leadership in this exciting area of science with \$375 million in federal government investment and more than \$400 million in investments from the provinces, foreign agencies and the private sector.

Through Genome Canada, a non-profit foundation created by scientists in universities, government and industry, and inspired by the late Michael Smith, a Nobel laureate, today we can boast a cadre of more than 2,000 researchers and scientists from all regions of Canada. Of the scientists I have met, I was particularly impressed with many who have chosen to leave Sweden, the U.S. and France to join a research team in Canada because the climate for doing groundbreaking research in this field has become so attractive.

I, along with my parliamentary colleagues, congratulate Genome Canada for helping to make this country—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

* * *

FIREARMS PROGRAM

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the entire country spent a day remembering all our veterans who took up arms, and fought and died for the rights and freedoms we enjoy in Canada today.

Last week one of those veterans called my office to complain that he had just received a demand for \$60 from the Canada Firearms Centre. Apparently, this \$2 billion sinkhole is so hard up for cash that now it is sending our vets a bill for \$60 to renew their firearms licences. Why do Liberals think we will all be safer if our brave veterans have a licence to own their guns? These are the same people who had guns thrust into their hands and were asked to defend our freedom and democracy.

At the same time, the government is giving free licence renewals to 770,000 gun owners in Canada. Why could the Liberals not find it in their hard hearts to extend this free offer to our veterans? This is a shame. Lest we forget, 2005 is the Year of the Veteran.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome members of the Canadian Dental Association to Parliament Hill. In an era of health care renewal, we must not forget the importance of oral health.

Canada has 18,000 dentists. Representatives of their professional association are in Ottawa this week to inform parliamentarians of the important role that dentistry plays in the overall health and well-being of Canadians.

Many Canadians enjoy a high standard of oral health. We can build on this foundation through ongoing research and education to ensure that all Canadians have access to the care they need.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Enviro-Action, a community group founded in Alma, in my riding, in 1988, will be holding a large benefit on Saturday to raise funds for its activities in our community.

Enviro-Action is a group of men and women who have joined forces to reduce greenhouse gases in our environment and to encourage the production and consumption of organic vegetables.

I congratulate Enviro-Action on its involvement in diverse activities that have a beneficial effect on individual and collective behaviour toward conservation and environmental protection.

I invite everyone in my riding and elsewhere to come and support this organization whose environmental awareness activities are so important.

I will be there to applaud them on Saturday for the excellence of their commitment and for their success, not only with schoolchildren but with the general public as well. Congratulations. Long live Enviro-Action.

* * *

[*English*]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak about two outstanding institutions in my riding of Thornhill. They are Temple Har Zion and the Jaffari Islamic Centre.

I am pleased to announce they were this year's winners of the Harmony Movement Award. This award is given in recognition of an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution toward eliminating barriers to diversity. Recipients are leaders who have made a constant and significant contribution to the enrichment of our country.

Twenty-five years ago, all it took was a joint parking lot, which brought together two different faiths that, on the surface, had very little in common. This award reflects positive community spirit, one that sends a message of peace and harmony. As Sumar Ebrahim said, "the more our communities work together, the more we find we have in common, both our communities believe in justice, diversity and peace".

It is relationships like this which make Canada the multicultural society that we have today. It is truly inspiring.

S. O. 31

•(1405)

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative Party has in this session forced the government to lower taxes, reform employment insurance and encourage democratic reform, the Liberals continue their legacy of scandal, secrecy and indecision.

The contempt for the people of Canada shown by the government is no more evident than in the refusal of the Prime Minister and his ministers to stand and be held accountable in the House. Our job is to ask the questions. The government's job is to answer to us and to Canadians. From the sponsorship scandal to special favours for exotic dancers, the Liberals continue to break the rules, avoid accountability and dodge the issues.

I am proud to say that everyday the Conservative Party works to build the confidence of Canadians so that we can restore accountability, integrity and honesty to government.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TORONTO'S ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Sunday, November 14, 2004, will go down in history as an important date for French culture in Ontario. That was the day the Alliance Française de Toronto opened its third campus to teach French language and culture. Toronto's Alliance Française, founded in 1902, has become the largest in North America.

The ceremony, under the patronage of Her Excellency the Governor General, was attended by 300 people and presided over by the hon. Minister of National Defence and His Excellency Daniel Jouanneau, ambassador of France.

I would like to take this opportunity to make special mention of the unfailing support France provides for the Alliance Française network in Canada.

I salute this initiative by the board of directors of Toronto's Alliance Française—of which I am an active member—and offer my congratulations on the excellent cooperation between France and Canada.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Organization has declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Women's rights advocates have chosen this day for the elimination of violence to commemorate the lives of the Mirabal sisters, three political activists in the Dominican Republic who were assassinated in 1961 on the orders of Dominican leader Rafael Trujillo.

We have a collective responsibility to never tolerate violence against women. That is why I commend the four fathers who have founded in Quebec the Association des familles de victimes d'actes criminels. Through their awareness initiative, two of them, namely Mr. Boisvenu and Mr. Caretta, fathers of Julie Boisvenu and Cathy

Caretta, both of whom were murdered, are educating the public about the scope of the problem.

Saying no to violence against women is the first step toward eradicating it.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMUNITY WHEELS PROGRAM

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I had the privilege of attending at Turpin Pontiac Buick car dealership the presentation by General Motors of Canada of six vans to volunteer community organizations in this city.

This is part of GM's Community Wheels Program through which it is making its vehicles available to charitable organizations in communities across Canada. Picking up the cost of gas, insurance and maintenance, GM is making it possible for voluntary organizations to provide better services to seniors, youth, singles, and to those in need in our communities.

I want to congratulate General Motors, the United Way, which is handling the distribution of these vehicles, and all the voluntary organizations that I know are going to make excellent use of them.

* * *

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have reached the halfway point of the fall session. It is time for a first term report card. Unfortunately, things have not been going well for the PM.

In leadership class, we were unable to give a mark. He is afraid to make decisions and the other children have their way with him. He got off to a bad start by making promises he could not keep.

In English class, he has been working with our class chatterbox who has done her best to get him in trouble. Her vocabulary is vicious and she just cannot be quiet. He now refuses to work with her.

In math, he gets an F. He chose a partner for this term's biggest project. How was he to know that the other child had financial dyslexia? Their budget project ended up being wrong by \$7 billion, when they confused 1.9 and 9.1.

Unfortunately, most of his classmates were caught cheating on an advertising assignment. It seems that our student has known about this for some time. We have begun an inquiry, but he and others are not being cooperative.

Overall, we have great concern over this student's performance. He may soon have to be expelled and have to give his place to a more deserving student.

•(1410)

MACEDONIAN PLACE

Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House of a \$500,000 silver gala event that took place this weekend in Toronto in honour of Louis Turpen, who was the builder of the airport in Toronto.

The Canadian Macedonian Place was built 25 years ago and is in much need of renovations. The gala event raised \$500,000 and it will serve the community very well. This magnificent facility has served the Macedonian community in Toronto for the last 25 years and we look forward to the community using this facility in the near future.

* * *

[Translation]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, the Lab Chrysotile mining company shut down indefinitely its operations at the Lac d'amiante du Canada mine located in Thetford Mines, Quebec.

To the 450 workers who have lost their jobs, I wish to extend my full and unconditional support in ensuring that their jobs are maintained at the Lac d'amiante mine.

We are calling on the Lab Chrysotile company to show openness and consideration for these workers. The Lac d'amiante mine is a major employer in the Thetford Mines area, and this closure will have a major impact on the local economy.

The federal government has a duty to intervene in this matter. It must ensure that the affected workers have access to training programs that will help them make decisions about their future in their community.

These workers can count on the support of the members from the NDP in Quebec and Canada; we are fighting alongside them.

* * *

[English]

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the wake of the Alberta Senate election, a new phobia has just been discovered, “democrophobia”. The six early warning signs are:

One, an irrational and excessive fear of parliamentary committees interviewing judges.

Two, a disturbing lack of guilt while denying membership forms to rivals in the Liberal leadership race.

Three, a fear of debate, invoking closure within the first six days of becoming Prime Minister.

Four, the experience of extreme highs and lows in favour or against democratic nominations; being for nomination battles involving political enemies, but against nomination battles involving friends.

S. O. 31

Five, the denial about past statements such as “Free votes in the House of Commons are now a matter of course”, yet, within months disallowing a free vote by Liberal members on the gun registry.

Six, the mere sight of Senate elections causing panic attacks, odd outbursts like “no piecemeal reform”, and a paralysis of action.

A prime minister with one or more of those symptoms should be evaluated by Canadian voters as soon as possible.

* * *

[Translation]

UNIVERSITY OF SHERBROOKE

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for several years now, the University of Sherbrooke's department of history and political science has been organizing a parliamentary matching program for BA students in applied political science.

Currently, about 20 students are matched with a member of Parliament and his or her team on Parliament Hill. The purpose of this initiative is to familiarize these students with the role and concrete tasks that members must fulfill in the House of Commons. I hope that this valuable experience, which complements their university education, will generate an interest in parliamentary life among these students, so that some day they may want to replace us.

The Bloc Québécois wishes to the students of the University of Sherbrooke a stay that will prove very useful in the pursuit of their education.

* * *

[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, November 25 marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This is a single day of awareness, but the problem is one that women face 365 days a year.

Historically, women have been targeted by family members, friends and strangers alike. This is a problem we face right here at home where more than half of Canadian women have been victims of at least one act of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. This trend must not continue.

The United Nations first declared November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women back in 1999. The date was set in remembrance of three Latin American sisters who were assassinated for their political activism.

I encourage all members to join me in commemorating those women and those who have suffered gender violence as we work together to create a world in which women can be safe.

* * *

•(1415)

AS PRIME MINISTER AWARDS

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Wendy Yu, a constituent of mine currently attending the University of Waterloo, on being named a national finalist in the 2004 As Prime Minister Awards.

Oral Questions

Ms. Yu responded to the question, "If you were the Prime Minister of Canada, what political vision would you offer to improve our living standards, and ensure a secure and prosperous global community?"

Wendy was selected as a finalist from hundreds of entrants for offering some of the most innovative visions for the country, demonstrating her ability to defend her ideas in front of a panel of judges, and her contributions to the community and volunteer organizations.

It is exciting to see Canadian youth put forth their vision for Canada. I am a strong supporter of youth involvement in the political process. I ask the House to join me in wishing Wendy the best of luck in her future endeavours.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the immigration minister is now trying to claim she is against the government's exotic dancer program. She claims the government should not be in the business of supplying Canada's strip clubs. Yet the same minister sent her right-hand man to such a club to facilitate the importation of women to work there.

Can the minister explain this breathtaking hypocrisy to Canadians?

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. Let me clarify a bit. I have always had an issue with the exotic dancer category. It is an issue. There is an industry out there that clearly, whether I like it or not, and whether those members approve or not, is an industry in this country. They have a right to have their labour market needs approved whether I like it or not. That is exactly what they are doing.

Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess I just cannot let that one stand. The minister says that she just has to do it.

Is she seriously trying to tell us that she absolutely had to send her right-hand man to the club to facilitate the importation? If that is the case, we over here and I am sure a lot of her own party's members would like to know, is that kind of service available to every constituency in the country?

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration there is an obligation, when people request assistance, for staff to meet with the individuals. That is exactly what the staff member did.

Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House and outside this House sees through that answer.

There is a letter to the editor where a Canadian immigrant writes the following:

—"special governmental treatment" used to happen in my home country... where money, power and connections used to be the only language of the day. I did not know that same thing happens in Canada too.

What message is the minister and the government sending to the hundreds of thousands of immigrants and Canadians who expect fair treatment and who play by the rules?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again there are allegations being made in this House that are most unfortunate.

In fact, it is quite clear based on the words of individuals involved that there was no preferential treatment here. For example, the husband of one of the women involved made the following statement:

There was no preferential treatment, period. This is unfortunate for us and everyone else concerned because none of it's true.

In another quote:

Neither myself nor my husband...have ever spoken with Judy Sgro. There was... no commitment made—

The Speaker: The Deputy Prime Minister would want to set a good example and not refer to members by name, and instead by title.

• (1420)

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thousands of immigrants and their families are caught in the enormous immigration backlog. They and their MPs often cannot get a response from the minister. So imagine their shock to learn that the minister's most senior political assistant dropped what he was doing to travel to Toronto to personally meet with a strip club owner and discuss how the minister could help bring in more strippers.

Why on earth would the minister make that a priority?

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member I did not make it a priority.

As I said earlier, I have referred these matters to the Ethics Commissioner. Let us let him do his job and wait for his response.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister and her chief of staff gave special access to this campaign worker and to this strip club owner, access that so many others are denied.

Yet the minister says it is normal to have her chief of staff at the beck and call of a strip club owner wanting a special favour. Why has the minister not been asked to resign?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate that the allegations that are being thrown around here are completely unsubstantiated.

I have asked the hon. member and others in her party if they have evidence that supports these allegations, that they should table that evidence in this House.

We have an Ethics Commissioner who is at work. The Ethics Commissioner is looking at much of this. I think what is appropriate here is to let the Ethics Commissioner do his work. We will receive his report. That report will be made public.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a study released this morning by a professor from the Université du Québec à Montréal confirms that Canada's big banks saved \$10 billion in taxes over a 13-year period through 73 branches in tax havens. The Bloc Québécois has been denouncing this situation for 10 years.

How can the government accept that the provisions of the federal Income Tax Act, together with the tax convention with Barbados, allow the big banks to save billions of dollars, while ordinary citizens pay all their taxes here in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the study by the Université du Québec indicates that this is a very broad and complex issue involving a number of Canadian corporations doing business overseas.

The issue of international business taxation is a complicated one. We are developing our approach to this. I have indicated very clearly that we are looking particularly at those areas where there are ring fence regimes that are particularly odious. We want to move against them if we can.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is always quite complicated on that side when it comes to giving the public justice and treating everyone equally.

According to this study, in the first four years the banks saved \$5.7 billion in taxes by using tax havens. Our own figures in the Bloc Québécois show that in eight years, Canadian investment in Barbados increased by 369%.

What is the government waiting for to change its tax rules that allow banks and other companies to shirk their fair share of the tax load?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I would point out to the hon. gentleman that the issue of international business corporations and international taxation is one that is before a number of countries around the world.

I am happy to tell him that just four days ago I engaged in a discussion on this very topic with the other member countries at the G-20 meeting in Berlin. We all are seeking effective tax regimes that avoid taxation abuses. We are working hard together to see what we can do in joint international action.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government keeps saying that it is working against harmful tax practices both in international conventions and in the Income Tax Act, but the Prime Minister himself and his company, CSL, have profited greatly and continue to profit from such practices.

How does the government explain that in its fight against harmful tax practices it reduced by \$400 million the budget for the revenue agency with the people who specialize in analyzing these

transactions that allow banks and companies, such as the Prime Minister's CSL, to avoid paying billions of dollars in taxes to the Canadian tax authorities?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman has a specific allegation to make, he should make it rather than veiled innuendoes and character assassinations and demeaning commentaries that have absolutely no basis in fact.

In fact the report today by the Université du Québec demonstrates the fallacy of this gentleman's argument.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are not accusing anyone. We are condemning the immoral practices that the Prime Minister's family is currently benefiting from. That is what we are denouncing.

Why does the Minister of Finance not use the bill on tax conventions with countries, tabled recently, to fix the tax loopholes so that those who have to pay taxes pay their fair share like everyone else, including the Prime Minister of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman suggests that he is not making any allegations and then proceeds to make allegations. He has swallowed himself whole.

The Government of Canada is working on this issue in concert with other nations around the world. International concerted action is what is required here. It cannot be dealt with on a one off basis, and that is the forum in which we need to seek solutions.

That is why I have raised this at the International Monetary Fund, at the G-7 and at the G-20.

* * *

HIV-AIDS

Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last election and over the last year the Prime Minister has said that Canada has a moral obligation to address the issue of AIDS in Africa. Yet not one pill, no medication, no drugs have flowed from Canada to Africa, and there is no sign on the horizon that there will be any action.

Big pharma refuses to reduce its prices. The generics do not have any incentive to actually produce these medications. Of course, 8,000 people a day are dying due to AIDS in Africa.

When will the first pills be delivered?

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. The bill was passed in the last Parliament. The regulations have been drafted. They have been gazetted. We expect to hear back and complete the consultation period by mid-December. We expect the bill will be passed and proclaimed early in the new year. We will see how it goes at that point.

Oral Questions

This government has committed \$70 million to combat HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria and \$100 million for the WHO three by five initiative to fight AIDS.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it will be to Canada's shame if this turns out to be another Liberal broken promise.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. A majority of Canadians do not share the values of President Bush. What we want to know is why the decision has been made not to ensure that members of Parliament have an opportunity to present their views to the president directly.

My question for the Deputy Prime Minister is, why will there be no opportunity provided, given that these values are having an effect here and around the world?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, President Bush has a very busy schedule while he is here. In fact, he and his officials will be meeting with the Prime Minister and a wide range of ministers on key issues, such as security.

Let me inform the hon. member, if he is not aware, that President Bush has decided not to speak here in the House of Commons. That was a decision made by the president and his staff. We extended that invitation and would have, I know, all of us, warmly received President Bush had he chosen to speak here.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the immigration minister said her chief of staff was only doing his job when he travelled to a strip club to discuss importing women into Canada who work as strippers. Meanwhile, over half a million legitimate immigrants languish in the queue while Mr. Wons enjoys his time out chilling at the club.

Does a legitimate applicant who has been waiting years to be processed have to own a strip club before the minister's right-hand man will pay a visit?

• (1430)

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the Ethics Commissioner, a very competent independent officer of the House, will be reviewing these issues. We will await his report.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Terry Koumoudouros, owner of the House of Lancaster strip club, has been a faithful donor to the Liberal Party of Canada, giving over \$5,500 to Liberal candidates since they became government.

We know his intention was to get more strippers into Canada, circumventing our immigration laws. Was it the intention of the minister to send her chief of staff and campaign manager to solicit campaign contributions as a quid pro quo for her services?

The Speaker: I am afraid questions about electoral fundraising are not the administrative responsibility of the government in this House and therefore that question is out of order.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the immigration minister why her former chief of staff was charging meals in Ottawa while really on a trip to Toronto. This week I checked the immigration department's website and found that the website had been altered and there was no reference to any trip to Toronto.

Why did the minister order this cover-up?

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The minister has the floor.

The member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre will have a supplementary. How will he be able to ask it if he cannot hear the answer? We have to have some order in the House.

The minister is rising to answer the question.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that we follow all the Treasury Board guidelines, all the guidelines that we are required to follow, and post the information as required. The information is accurate. It has gone through a very detailed comptroller before it is posted.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is what I am talking about. They were posted and then changed after I asked a question in this assembly.

There is more. Her former chief of staff, while on a trip last April to Washington, was also claiming expenses in Ottawa. We know he cannot be in two places at one time. Clearly, these were bogus expenses.

My question for the minister: Minister, why did you approve these bogus claims?

The Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre knows he must address his questions to the Chair. He runs the risk of having his question ruled out of order if he persists in this way of asking questions.

The hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, everything gets posted, all of them that are expense are approved as well.

May I also remind the member that all of these issues have been referred to the Ethics Commissioner. Let us let the Ethics Commissioner do his job.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance announced that he would lower employment insurance contributions and raise benefits for the unemployed. The EI program is so deficient that merely 40% of the jobless can qualify for it.

Oral Questions

If the government really cares about the fate of the unemployed, would it not be better to conduct an in-depth review of the whole employment insurance program and make it more fair, before lowering contributions?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a Liberal Party task force will table a report over the next few days. There is also a parliamentary committee that is examining the issue and that will table a report. I expect this report in the coming weeks. We will take the necessary measures to follow up on the decisions and recommendations of the House committee.

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not see why we are being asked to wait for the committee's report, since the minister himself is already talking about lowering contributions.

If the government really wants to fight child poverty, does it not agree that one of the most effective ways to do so is by improving the employment insurance program, which would allow the government to intervene directly, in support of children? After all, if there are children living in poverty, it is because there are parents living in poverty.

•(1435)

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance just said that contributions will be lowered. Second, the custom here is to respect the work of the House and of the committees. Therefore, we intend to respect the work done by our colleagues, who are reviewing the issue and developing appropriate recommendations. Third, the unemployment rate in Quebec has dropped to 8.3%. We are creating—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

* * *

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Quebec minister Benoît Pelletier confirmed that Quebec wants to speak for itself at UNESCO. In connection with the discussions on the convention of cultural diversity, Quebec has presented an amendment to avoid culture being subordinated to economic logic alone, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage did not go along with it.

Is the minister's attitude to Quebec's amendment not evidence that Quebec is right to want to have its own say within international bodies in areas that fall under its jurisdiction?

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must provide the Bloc Québécois critic with some reassurance. We have been in touch with the minister of culture for Quebec as well as those of the other provinces. Our proposal contains positions which reflect each element of Canada, but of course in the end it is the Canadian position.

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the mechanism for enforcing the convention, the government's position is even more of a disappointment. While Quebec is calling for an effective dispute resolution mechanism, Ottawa has nothing to say on this.

What is the minister's explanation for ignoring Quebec's recommendations and putting no dispute resolution mechanism in her document?

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I explained to my hon. colleague before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage yesterday that we are in favour of having mechanisms, but the negotiations are barely underway. Obviously, there is still a year left for negotiating such mechanisms.

Canada is, moreover, the rapporteur, as well as having a hand in drafting the preliminary convention. Obviously we have played a lead role, and will continue to do so. There is no doubt about that.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the immigration minister would have us believe that it is just normal business for her right-hand man, her chief of staff, to go and visit anybody who complains about an immigration file at their workplace.

We all know that is not true. We all know that he did go to visit Mr. Terry Koumoudouros at the House of Lancaster strip club, Mr. Koumoudouros being a serial donor to the Liberal Party. Can the minister explain why she directed her right-hand man to give preferential access to the owner of this strip club to import dancers from overseas? Can she explain that?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty clear from what the club owner and others have said that there was no preferential treatment granted in this case, but we know the Ethics Commissioner is looking into these matters. I think it is important that the Ethics Commissioner finish his work. His report will be made public.

Again, I can only come back to the conclusion that the language being used by some of the hon. members on the other side is really very unacceptable. They are abusing their parliamentary immunity. They are abusing that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Southeast.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the actions of this government that are unacceptable when the minister suggests that it is acceptable. She talks about the Ethics Commissioner inquiry. It did not begin until the matter became public. We did not know about the strip club visit until yesterday. Is the Ethics Commissioner looking at that? I think not.

But how about this question of the cover-up? Why did the minister direct her staff to go to the published information about her chief of staff's expenses and have those reports changed after the fact and after questions were raised in the House? Why the cover-up?

•(1440)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would simply ask that if the hon. member has any evidence of a cover-up, I would suggest it is his obligation—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is evident that hon. members are trying to help the Deputy Prime Minister with her answer, but she seems quite able to continue on her own and seems determined to do so in the face of all this noise. But I cannot hear her and she might say something out of order and then we would have a hullabaloo in the House. We will have the Deputy Prime Minister give her answer. Then we will hear what else there is.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say very, very simply that if the hon. member has evidence of a cover-up, I would ask him to table that evidence in this House.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Bev Oda (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the September issue of a magazine featured the Minister of Canadian Heritage on its cover. We have now learned that the same magazine received a \$40,000 grant from the minister's department.

Has the minister learned nothing from the sponsorship scandal? Why is she handing out taxpayers' money to buy her own publicity?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 27, 2004, I agreed to take part in a photo op in support of the event organized by Caftan Montréal. Caftan Montréal is the organization that will be hosting on Saturday a fashion show whose profits will be donated to UNICEF and the Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec.

The mayor of Montreal and Quebec's immigration minister will attend. Truth be said, everyone is welcome, and it would be great to see you all in Montreal on Saturday.

[*English*]

Ms. Bev Oda (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 50% of the moneys raised goes back to the magazine. This grant application was languishing in the department for over six months. Does the minister expect Canadians to believe that a \$40,000 grant only one month after she was the cover girl is merely a coincidence?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the *Arab Women* magazine and the Caftan Montréal organization are two very different things. The magazine applied for funding on March 29, 2004. I was not the Minister of Canadian Heritage at the time. Also, the profits from the event will be donated to UNICEF and the Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec.

Once again, I extend the invitation to everyone—honestly, I do—to attend the fashion show on Saturday, along with the mayor of Montreal and Quebec's immigration minister. It promises to be a great evening.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there an increasing concern in my riding of Thornhill regarding the government's commitment to health research, specifically for catastrophic diseases like diabetes, breast and prostate cancer and heart disease.

Could the health minister tell us what the Government of Canada is doing in support of Canadian health research to ensure that we continue to build on the great momentum that has been established over the last five years?

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that health research goes a long way to ensuring good health care for Canadians. Over the last many years since 1997, we have invested over \$13 billion in research in Canada. Since 1999 when the Canadian Institutes of Health Research were established, we are now on the cutting edge of research internationally.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Housing. The minister has had some time to think about Zonolite since we asked him a question about it some time ago. This asbestos-containing deadly material has been found in homes on reserves but is also contained throughout many homes in the rest of Canada.

The minister has had some time to think about it. Can he report to the House what the government intends to do now to help identify where this Zonolite is across the country and to help people in whose homes it is to get rid of the stuff?

Hon. Joe Fontana (Minister of Labour and Housing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question of the hon. member and the concern expressed by him and by others. There is no doubt that we are concerned. We want to first of all ascertain the type of insulation that was used, where it is being used and whether or not it was on reserve or throughout Canada.

We have posted at CMHC any information. We are trying to gather all the information that the government would require in order to make a decision, but I would appreciate any information or any assistance that the member or other members might provide us. It would be greatly appreciated.

• (1445)

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we already know that it is not just on some reserves. It is in hundreds of thousands of homes across Canada. There is some evidence to this effect.

I remember a previous Liberal government that helped Canadians with UFFI in their homes. It helped them to test for it and then helped them to get rid of it.

All the government has to say today is that it is planning the same kind of program for people who have Zonolite in their homes. We can work out the details later; make the commitment in principle today.

Oral Questions

Hon. Joe Fontana (Minister of Labour and Housing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we are looking at and finding out all the information that we can for those people who may have, prior to 1990, installed some insulation. I am sure that the member would want to be responsible and not suggest that every piece of insulation put into every home prior to 1990 included Zonolite. I would hope that he would not alarm people.

We are gathering the information, we will give people the information and we will then move and act as responsibly as we possibly can.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works and the Prime Minister's executive assistant were in the habit of personally distributing grants to sponsored festivals such as Just for Laughs or the Montreal Jazz Festival, and designating the communications firms to be used.

Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage hold meetings, formally or informally, with the representatives of either of these events to discuss the allocation of funds?

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. No official request has been made to the department, except what is usually granted to them as major festivals such as the jazz festival and Just for Laughs, to which our department has been contributing funds for a number of years.

M. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, PCC): Mr. Speaker, there is one problem and this is it. The Morrow communication agency, belonging to the minister's husband, is being paid to work for a consortium of businesses that benefited from Canadian Heritage's sponsorship and grants program.

My question is very simple: How long has the minister known about this?

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the contract was awarded in September 2003 by the REMI, the Regroupement des événements majeurs internationaux du Québec. At that time, the REMI was making a presentation to the Government of Quebec. It has nothing to do with the federal government. I was a federal member of Parliament in September 2003.

It surprises me that the Leader of the Opposition has allowed the hon. member to ask this question, because he has many people around him who know the REMI very well and are very familiar with its activities in Quebec.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gordon O'Connor (Carleton—Mississippi Mills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more questions have been raised about HMCS *Chicoutimi*. Because its crew had to repair an air vent, yet another

technical problem, both hatches on the main tower were left wide open while it was on the surface in heavy wave conditions.

Given that there are other sources of air, leaving the tower completely open to the rough sea brings into question training and procedures followed by the navy. Will the minister confirm that five years of dithering by the Liberal government led to both the technical and the training problems that face the submarine service?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing I can confirm to the House is that there is a serious board of inquiry engaged in ascertaining, with the best technical advice and the best examination, exactly what occurred.

We owe it to the security of the men and women in our armed forces to conduct a thorough technical investigation of what occurred. We will come up with the conclusions of the board of inquiry and we will take the necessary measures to rectify the problem, but we will not engage in a political exercise in the House that threatens the security of our armed services.

Mr. Gordon O'Connor (Carleton—Mississippi Mills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were told that all the boats had gone through an exhaustive process of engineering assessment, repair, overhaul and maintenance. For years it has been known that three layers of sealant are required on electrical wiring. Yesterday we learned that the HMCS *Chicoutimi* had only one layer of sealant on its wires when it sailed, not the required three.

Submariners have said it would be "absolutely criminal" not to thoroughly examine the changes needed to make the boats safe before they sail.

Why were the proper wiring upgrades not done on the *Chicoutimi*?

• (1450)

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I would like to suggest for my colleagues in the House is that it would be absolutely criminal to come to conclusions before the board of inquiry has given a scientifically proven answer as to exactly what was necessary.

The hon. member knows full well that the *Chicoutimi* was manufactured in a different yard from the other three submarines, has different characteristics and has different manufacturing specifications.

I ask members to let the board of inquiry do its job, let it report and let the security of the mariners who serve in our submarines be our primary preoccupation rather than this—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

* * *

[Translation]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, times are tough for correctional officers, who having been working without a contract since June 2002.

Oral Questions

After more than 80 bargaining sessions no agreement has been reached despite intervention by a conciliator. Management's negotiator presented a 40-page proposal, which addresses only things that have already been settled or rejected.

Is this not a clear indication that the President of the Treasury Board is dragging his feet because he does not intend to negotiate an agreement with correctional officers quickly?

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is that we are going through exactly the same process as we do with every bargaining unit. There are well established practices for this. This is a new bargaining unit that is not familiar with some of the federal systems. We are working with them and we will reach a conclusion, as we always do.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this has been going on for 30 months.

Why is the Treasury Board refusing to recognize the valuable and important role of correctional officers, who do difficult and essential work under extremely unpleasant conditions?

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it may interest the member to know that I actually worked in one of the federal prisons when I was a student. I have great respect for the work that these people do. I know exactly how hard the work is. We are doing everything we can to see that they get a proper settlement.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an internal review by the CFIA states that the Liberal government's response to the mad cow crisis was plagued by poor planning, staffing problems and repeated failures to share information. The agriculture minister must immediately come clean and publicly state what steps he has taken to address the many concerns outlined in this review.

Could the minister explain his department's incompetence in the face of one of our country's largest crises?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how the hon. member opposite fails to read the whole report and just picks and chooses, cherry-picks, so to speak.

Both the consultant's report and the international report indicate that the agency's response to BSE amounted to a job well done. The member knows full well that the government has been there for producers in terms of over \$2 billion of assistance. We continue to work to get the border open, and CFIA is seen as having done a reasonably good job.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always the same old tune. In the meantime Quebec farmers have to sell off their livestock to a virtual monopoly. They are fed up with these dirty tricks.

Why else would the minister be so slow to react if not to protect the Levinoff and Colbex group, which contributed \$44,000 to the Liberal coffers?

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a contradiction in terms of the way the member approaches this question. If we were to favour a beef slaughter plant, then why would we be moving with different programs to assist the slaughter industry in increasing its capacity? That would provide competition to the very plant she says that we are favouring.

We are doing our best to increase slaughter capacity and the member opposite should be assisting us in that regard.

* * *

●(1455)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

In 2000 the Prime Minister, in his capacity as finance minister, committed to developing national environmental and sustainable development indicators to help improve overall decision making in Canada. At that time the Prime Minister stated that the current means of measuring progress were inadequate and that these indicators could well have a greater impact on public policy than any other single measure we might introduce.

Could the Minister of Finance please report on the progress his department is making in implementing these indicators?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for the work he did on this very issue when he was with the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.

In the throne speech in February of this year the government committed to start incorporating key environmental indicators into our decision making. Consistent with that commitment, the budget of 2004 provided \$15 million over two years to develop and report on several environmental indicators, including those on clean air, clean water and greenhouse gas emissions. We intend to continue and complete that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last spring the President of the Treasury Board introduced a set of guidelines for the appointment process of the heads of crown corporations, yet at the first chance the government had to follow these guidelines it chose to ignore them. The revenue minister shuffled his friend's resumé to the top of the pile. Now it is clear that the rules for crown corporation appointments were broken.

When can Canadians expect the President of the Treasury Board to follow through on his pledge to clean up the appointment process of the heads of crown corporations?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member and I had quite an interesting discussion about this when I appeared on my estimates. As I informed the member, as I will now inform the House, I am about to produce a report that looks at some of these changes.

I should point out something. When the committee had Mr. Feeney before it, it went to great lengths to point out how qualified he was and the excellent experience he had that prepared him for the role he now occupies.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been two years since the B.C. government first asked the Liberals to help it in a major attack against pine beetle damage but they have never really responded to that request. Now the province of B.C. is back again asking for help on a new 10 year plan to mitigate the damage caused by the pine beetle.

My question is for the Minister of Industry who is from British Columbia. Will his government finally recognize the magnitude of this damage and join in with the province of B.C. in its new 10 year plan to rescue its forests from this beetle damage? Will the government do it?

Hon. R. John Efford (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last several months I have had a number of meetings with the Government of British Columbia over this very serious issue. We are continuing to dialogue with the minister in British Columbia. We will come forward with a plan on which both governments can work together.

* * *

[Translation]

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during a meeting of the social affairs committee, the Minister of State for Families and Caregivers categorically refused to give full retroactivity to seniors, under the guaranteed income supplement program.

However, it is the federal government's fault if these elderly people did not get the millions of dollars to which they were fully entitled. The government failed to fulfill its responsibilities and must now correct the situation.

What is the minister waiting for to recognize his mistakes and correct the situation immediately by giving full retroactivity to seniors?

[English]

Hon. Tony Ianno (Minister of State (Families and Caregivers), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the case to which the member has referred is before the courts and they will be dealing with that.

As he knows, we are following all provincial governments, especially Quebec, that go back 11 months in retroactivity. In some cases there is no retroactivity in social services in Quebec. We will continue to work to ensure that all seniors who deserve the guaranteed income supplement continue to receive it. We will continue doing mailings to ensure that everyone gets it.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the constituency that I represent, Madawaska—Restigouche, has a large number of seasonal workers who are making a significant contribution to the economic and social successes of our communities, as is the case in many other ridings in the country.

In fact, seasonal work is very important to the economy of Madawaska—Restigouche, since it includes industries such as forestry, tourism, construction and agriculture, which are key components of my region's economy.

I want to ask the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development if he intends—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche for his question and comment. My colleague is well aware that, last spring, the government improved the employment insurance program by adding five weeks of benefits in those regions where the unemployment rate exceeds 10%.

However, the hon. member will agree with me that employment insurance is but one part of the overall solution to seasonal work. This is why we are working with local agencies to reach—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hochelaga.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago the Minister of Health called the issue of Internet pharmacies a domestic issue for Americans. And yet the American ambassador, Paul Celucci, has declared that Canada might be facing serious supply problems if the American government gives its approval for large scale purchases of pharmaceuticals on the Internet.

Supply

If the U.S. ambassador recognizes that Canada cannot meet the American demand, is the minister prepared to do the same?

[*English*]

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I was in the United States of America at Harvard Medical School, all I said was that this was a domestic issue for the U.S. that would have serious impacts on our lives as Canadians and that we could not be the drug stores of the United States of America. I made that clear then and I will make it clear again for the hon. member. We will do whatever it takes to protect the adequacy and safety of the supply of drugs for Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Mr. Alix Baptiste, the Secretary of State of Haitians Living Abroad.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, could the hon. government House leader tell us what our business will be for the balance of today, tomorrow and through next week?

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue with the opposition motion. Tomorrow we hope to complete third reading of Bill C-7, respecting parks second reading of Bill C-22, the social development legislation, and second reading of Bill C-9, the Quebec economic development bill.

Next week we will give priority to second reading of Bill C-24, the equalization legislation. We also will try to complete any business left over from this week.

When bills come back from the Senate or committee, as the case may be, we will add them to the list. Hopefully this will include Bill S-17 respecting tax treaties and Bill C-5, the learning bonds bill. By the end of the week, we hope to be able to proceed with Bills C-25, the radarsat bill, and Bill C-26, the border services bill.

Next Thursday shall be an allotted day.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 163

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that there is an error in today's order paper in the translated English text of private member's Motion No. 163 in the name of the hon. member for Montcalm.

The motion uses the word "might" in the English version where the word "would" should be used. This will be corrected. Therefore, the corrected motion will read as follows in English:

That, in the opinion of the House, in the current World Trade Organization negotiations, the government should not agree to any concession that would weaken collective marketing strategies or the supply management system.

• (1505)

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise on a point of order on this issue. I believe I was the one who brought this to the attention of the table yesterday. The reason I did so is it has quite an impact, which I would like the Chair to consider.

Yesterday at a meeting with some colleagues in the House, we were discussing the merits of this private member's item. It was quite obvious that many colleagues were against the motion because it was so vague in its tenor. I for one was reading the motion and thought it was very precise in terms of what it did, until we stumbled upon the fact that they were reading the English text, their first language, and I was reading the French text, which is my first language.

I want to suggest to Your Honour, in light of what I just mentioned, about the hour of debate that took place where many members mistakenly believed that this had a text other than the one intended by the mover of the motion, that the hour of debate should be annulled and the process should restart. It was quite obvious that many hon. members of the House, the critical mass of MPs who responded in the debate, were not reading from the text as it was initially proposed.

Therefore, I am of the opinion that the debate should restart and I submit that to Your Honour for consideration.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for his suggestion. I note there is already a second hour of debate on this motion which will take place. I will look at the possibility of restarting or extending the time or doing something, but I would not ask the hon. member to hold his breath in that respect. I will look at the matter. We have some time here and we will get back to the matter.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table documents in relation to a question I raised in question period today, and I ask for unanimous consent from the House to do so.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre have the unanimous consent of the House to table these documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—MIRABEL AIRPORT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Supply

Mr. Gordon O'Connor (Carleton—Mississippi Mills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for 35 years Mirabel Airport has stood as a symbolic reminder of the power of government to impose its will on landowners, even if it means dislocating families, destroying livelihoods and shattering communities. Based on some grandiose but flawed vision for Montreal, the Liberal government undertook the expropriation of 97,000 acres of land to build an airport in Mirabel.

The airport was intended to service the burgeoning city of Montreal, an hour away, and contribute to the explosive population and economic growth. Then Prime Minister Trudeau called it a project for the 21st century.

Of the 97,000 acres expropriated, only 5,000 were used for the airport. The Mirabel area at that time consisted of prime agricultural land with farming the mainstay of the local economy. The farmers whose lands were expropriated found out about the project over the radio.

The government ignored their protests. Some 3,200 families were dislocated, many from homesteads which had been in their families for decades. Houses were torn down and businesses were closed. Those who were fortunate enough to stay on their land had to pay rent to the government and try to farm, in spite of restrictions placed on how they could modify the land.

Now 35 years later, the full failure of the Mirabel vision is clear. What has not changed is the anger of the farmers who owned the land then and want it back now.

While most of the unused land was returned to farmers by the Mulroney government, almost 11,000 acres continue to be held by the federal government. The farmers want to buy this land back, but in its typically arrogant and meanspirited fashion, the Liberal government is saying no.

The Mirabel story is about far more than flawed visions and government mismanagement. It is about the right of farmers to own land, to enjoy the fruits of their labour on their land and to dispose of their property when, if and how they see fit. Mirabel should never have been allowed to happen. Government, any government, should never the right to exploit landowners by taking away their land without their consent and without fair compensation.

Mirabel is a symbol of this country's failure to protect the property rights of landowners, a failure that gives far too much power to governments and far too little regard for the right of individual property owners.

For a country that prides itself on being the champion of human and individual rights, we have displayed an appalling tolerance of governments that infringe on the property rights of landowners.

Governments at all levels, federal, provincial and municipal, too often display a blatant scorn for landowners, especially rural landowners. Examples are legion. A striking recent case is Premier Dalton McGuinty's proposal to ban development on 1.8 million acres of private land in southern Ontario in order to preserve a greenbelt. Premier McGuinty's plan is to impose this plan, without providing any compensation for the devaluation and loss to the landowner. If this project has so much widespread public benefit, then the Ontario

government must be prepared to compensate the landowners at a fair market value.

Expropriation is just one way the government exploits landowners. In recent years governments have increasingly been placing unreasonable restrictions on regulations on landowners that diminish property values and infringe on their ability to use their property as they see fit. Zoning laws, heritage regulations and conservation designations are just some of the ways in which governments impose restrictions on the rights of property owners.

My constituents in Carleton—Mississippi Mills are no strangers to the effects of intrusive legislation and bad public policy. However, landowners are beginning to fight back. In my riding, rural property owners have organized themselves into very vocal and active lobby groups. The rural landowners are spearheading a massive grassroots movement in defence of their rights as property owners. Their key message is they are fed up with government interference and want their property rights respected and protected.

These business owners, farmers and landowners have seen their property values and livelihood diminished by expropriation without just compensation, enforcement of urban property standards for rural lands and farms as a result of municipal amalgamation and the imposition of buffer zones.

● (1510)

The landowners believe that government has confused the right of private property with the public's privilege. Governments, they say, have overstepped their mandate and crossed the line from good government and into the private lives of citizens, and I agree that this too often is the case.

I also agree with landowners who are beginning to demand that property rights be entrenched in the Canadian Constitution. It is an abysmal situation that what should be a fundamental right, the right to own, enjoy and dispose of private property, was deliberately left out of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms for political purposes. It is time to change this situation.

My colleague, the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, has been a strong champion of property rights. Last week he introduced a private member's bill that would amend the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights to provide greater protection for property rights. Specifically, the legislation is intended to ensure that no person will be deprived of the use or enjoyment of property without full, just and timely compensation. I applaud the member for this initiative and I am pleased to support it.

Supply

During the past election campaign, the entrenchment of property rights in the Constitution was included as part of my platform. I believe strongly that landowners should be protected against arbitrary and unjustified intrusions by governments. If a government's restriction or regulation is shown to be for the public good, then landowners should be fairly and appropriately compensated for their loss.

Today's motion calls on the Liberal government to take the necessary steps to sell the 11,000 remaining acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel airport. It is time for the Liberal government to right a wrong. The farmers want and deserve to have their land back. Beyond this specific instance, I also want to push for measures to be introduced that will ensure that the Mirabel fiasco is never allowed to happen again, not anywhere in Canada.

It is time for Parliament to take steps to enshrine property rights in our Constitution.

• (1515)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has covered the issue quite well in his speech. I am glad he raised specifically the issue of property rights under the charter. It is a question which arises from time to time. I do not know how that discussion would ever get revisited, but I would like to support revisiting it.

Hopefully the member has had a little research done for him. I am interested in the criteria that must be satisfied to qualify for expropriation of property. Is he aware of what those criteria are that must be satisfied?

As a corollary to that would be with regard to his point on expropriation without just compensation and whether there is judicial, or some review or recourse available where there is a dispute with regard to whether the compensation is just.

Mr. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I cannot give all the specific criteria for the right of government to expropriate. If individuals have property rights within our Constitution, it would mean that governments, when they pass any legislation that affects property rights, would have to take into consideration the effect on individuals. It may be justified for example in an environmental case to protect some endangered species, some animal or some bird. It may be justified because these species are facing extinction.

However, say someone owns a plot of land and on that land is some acreage of trees. In one of these trees is an endangered bird and the government passes legislation which says that endangered bird has to be protected. The government can do that, but the property owner should not be restricted so that he or she has to pay tax on the land which cannot be used. If property owner cannot sell the land, that property is devaluated. Therefore, the property owner has to be compensated

What I am saying is, in future if we have property rights, when governments at all levels pass regulations that affect property owners, they have to work out the consequences.

As to arbitration, I imagine that if we had property rights, within the legislation that would flow from those property rights would be a mechanism to deal with disputes.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for joining in the debate today and bringing to light a couple of things that we need to look at.

When the Progressive Conservative Party joined with the then Alliance Reform Party and today calling themselves the Conservative Party, I distinctly remember watching TV and the leader of the Conservative Party said, "We are the party of Brian Mulroney, our beacon of light". Going back to what Brian Mulroney did, in—

• (1520)

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member opposite has mischaracterized the Leader of the Opposition by attributing a statement to him that is untrue. He must table that before he can make those kinds of assertions.

The Speaker: I am sorry. I thought the hon. parliamentary secretary was asking a question and referred to some other statements. I am not sure that there is a requirement that he table other statements. The hon. parliamentary secretary, I am sure, will want to put his question to the member for Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, if we were to take light of what the Leader of the Opposition said, then I wholeheartedly believe that this member would agree that ADM was something that was done during the Mulroney years. We created this agency, the Montreal airport, the Pierre Elliot Trudeau airport, and the Mirabel airport. We put them together under ADM back then. It was something that was signed by the Government of Canada by the then Prime Minister in 1992.

If his leader is in agreement, and he says that Brian Mulroney was a beacon of light, why is that party arguing this point today?

Mr. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand what this has to do with my speech. However, I am—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: It was signed in 1992.

Mr. Gordon O'Connor: That may be so. But I am talking about the need for property rights so that things like Mirabel or Pickering, there are 20,000 acres of dead acres sitting north of Pickering, do not happen. Future governments must take into account individual rights.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part briefly in this debate. I listened to the speech of the member for Carleton—Mississippi Mills and I must say that I do not agree with what he said.

First, I disagree with the substantive issue. Second, what the member has presented as the current situation is not the case. The member may not be aware of this—it is possible—but he was wrong when he claimed that expropriation was currently happening in some sort of legal void and that owners were not adequately compensated for their property and so on.

So, this is totally false and he was wrong to make such assertions. He must know quite well that this is not the way the expropriation process works. He may ask that the process be improved, of course, and he is free to do so.

Supply

However, this is not the same thing as claiming that the people who were expropriated in Mirabel did not receive any compensation. This is not true. There was a system in place, there was arbitration, there was compensation, people were paid. Many of them moved later into the riding that I represent, and I remember this is the way that it happened at the time.

Consequently, there is a compensation system in place now. The member should not claim that people who are expropriated are not compensated or protected and, based on these false assertions, then claim that everyone's rights were infringed.

That is another issue. In 1969 or around that time, the Government of Canada expropriated close to 100,000 acres of land in order to build the Mirabel international airport. I think that it is important to give a little background on this whole issue.

In 1985, the Prime Minister at the time was the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, who is well known to the member for Niagara Falls opposite, as he was a member back then. He will recall that Treasury Board had approved a system to resell some 80,000 acres of surplus land around the airport.

The member opposite will most likely remember the mess created at that time by Roch LaSalle and others in the resale of these lands and the arbitrary fashion in which it was done, and so on.

Also at that time, an agricultural recovery program was established. A number of initiatives had been launched towards the late 80s, notably greenhouses. In 1988, the Government of Canada announced that 11,000 acres of land, designated as airport reserve, would be leased over the long term. This was happening at the same time as agricultural recovery.

The lands were thus leased over the long term, leases were signed. These contracts were duly drafted by the Conservative government of the time. If my memory serves me well, they were leases ending around 2010. Since then, we have heard that there was an offer on the table to prolong these leases for another 14-year period. The leases would then be extended under certain conditions, and so forth.

In the meantime, the Aéroports de Montréal corporation, ADM, was formed by Mr. Mulroney's Conservative government. What kind of deal was signed with it? A lease for some 60 years was signed.

After a contract for 60 years is signed with an organization, it cannot be terminated one third of the way, more or less, and the lands sold to somebody else. It cannot be done once the contract with ADM has been signed.

These are some of the deficiencies in what is being proposed today by the Conservative Party. Obviously, it is now trying today—and will fail—to look good in the eyes of some in the region of Mirabel.

I find a little surprising to see New Democrats fall into the trap, because they should know better. The New Democrats sitting here beside me know that a good number of Bombardier employees and other workers in the Mirabel region want to protect the territorial integrity of the area.

• (1525)

They want to be able to secure the desired long term expansion, the proposals that are being made, but have not been approved yet, and everything else. It is very disappointing to see them fall into this trap. Anyway, they will be the ones bearing the burden, and if they want to go ahead, they will. That will certainly be a tough sell in the eastern part of my riding. I look forward to see what the unions will say about that in my neck of the woods.

For the Bloc, it is also a double-edged sword. We heard today the hon. member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher tell us, on one hand, that we had to get rid of the land surrounding the airport, despite the will of ADM and others, and on the other hand, that we should announce as soon as possible government help for the aircraft manufacturing sector.

Honestly, there is no need to think long and hard to see that this suggestion borders on the ridiculous. How can we protect the sector that needs the land and, at the same time, get rid of that same land? It is clear that Bloc members are proposing conflicting solutions.

But that might be understandable. One member represents a given region. The member from the next region might have a different opinion. The dishes are rattling a little in the caucus room's cupboards. These things happen.

As for the Conservatives, I would like to be able to say they are sincere, but there is not an ounce of sincerity in them. Nary a bit of it. What we are talking about, of course, is contracts signed by the Conservative government, headed at the time by Brian Mulroney. The leader of the opposition is a big fan of his, and the member for Central Nova worships him even more. He is constantly telling us what a nice person Brian Mulroney was. That is not an opinion I share, nor do my constituents, or indeed most Canadians. Although they are quite free to declare their love for Brian Mulroney if they wish to.

Once again, let us recall one thing. As the Minister of Transport said again this morning, that same Brian Mulroney is trying to help the industry at this very time. He is lobbying on behalf of Bombardier to get facilities in the Mirabel area expanded.

I do not know if hon. members have been able to follow me through all this, but the situation is so contradictory that it would not be surprising if it did confuse people. On the one hand, we have a Bloc Québécois member saying that we need to get rid of the lands around the airport—which ADM says we need—and on the other we have her saying a bit later in her speech that we also need to provide help to Bombardier so that it can expand its operations on that same site. It would be interesting to know how that can be done, especially when the same parcel of land is involved, and has already been sold. I will come back to that later.

The contradiction is even greater for the Conservatives, as they are congratulating Brian Mulroney on the one hand, and repudiating him on the other. I am not going to talk about him much longer for reasons that all Canadians will understand, if they think back.

Supply

I noted, in the English speeches in particular, that certain Conservatives were stressing the point that there is nothing going on at Mirabel and it is a kind of vacant lot. While not wanting to describe this as intellectual dishonesty, although it may be pretty close to that, it is absolutely not true. Some of my constituents work there. I represent the neighbouring riding, and I know that this is clearly not true.

• (1530)

I suggest the hon. members go see for themselves the facilities for air freight and for DND's jets, including Bombardier's first home in Mirabel. I suggest they go and visit the airport facilities, of course, as well as the new Bombardier plant located a little further and, in the future I hope, the new facilities planned by Bombardier, which would create even more employment in this area bordering on the one I represent.

Many workers living in Lachute, Grenville, Brownsburg and other Quebec communities work at plants in Hawkesbury, which is located in my riding. For example, there is a Pittsburg Paint and Glass plant, manufacturing automotive windshields, the IVACO plant in l'Original, the Montebello Metal plant, manufacturing metal tubing, and there are more. But these three plants employ 1,500 workers.

The reverse is true as well. A large number of my constituents from the eastern part of the riding work in Quebec. In the West Island of Montreal, for instance, there is the pharmaceutical industry. But it is also true when we cross the bridge at Hawkesbury. It used to be called Perley bridge, and I am not too fond of its new name, Long-Sault bridge, but when we cross the bridge to Grenville, it is also true. People cross this bridge to work on the other side of the river, just as people living on the Quebec side sometimes cross it to work in Ontario.

I am speaking on behalf of those from my region who work in Mirabel and who, for the vast majority, want the Mirabel area to do well, in the interests of the people of that area and in their own, because they will be working in the plants in the Mirabel area.

We also have a number of Bombardier subcontractors in the riding I represent and in other parts of Ontario. However, the situation is not always well understood. People think of this industry located somewhere in Quebec, in a place that is less well known of people who are not from the area. They figure that it benefits only the immediate vicinity. The fact of the matter is this is a much more complex industry. It uses part manufactured just about everywhere in the country.

For example, about two years ago when I was a minister, I went to see a factory near Haley Station, not far from Pembroke, represented by the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. That factory at Haley Station was manufacturing aircraft landing gear parts for Bombardier.

One day we saw a very special scene. The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke was with me and she was feeling pleased with a contract that this factory had won to manufacture parts for Canadian military aircraft. The next day her colleague asked why the Government of Canada was supporting Bombardier. There was a kind of trick to it, because both members appeared in the same picture in the House of Commons. They sat on the same bench—the

one who was criticizing and the one who was celebrating. They were members of the same party; they took their seats together, on the same day. It shows the Conservative Party's lack of straightforwardness on some matters.

• (1535)

Now let us turn to the cargo capacity of Mirabel. There are fine incentives for businesses to locate in this region. Montreal is a world leader, we know, in the fields of aerospace—I have talked at length about that—telecommunications, and so on. We know that it is an important industry for the region.

I must draw the attention of the House to a press release that ADM has just issued. I invite all the members to read it. This is what it says:

Montreal, November 25, 2004

When Aéroports de Montréal decided in 2002 to concentrate passenger flight activity at Montréal-Trudeau, it was clearly understood that the facilities would be able to meet all the passenger requests for a period of at least thirty years, following which there was a possibility that passenger flights would be transferred back to Montréal-Mirabel.

Aéroports de Montréal has therefore formally committed to maintaining the Montréal-Mirabel platform in proper working order.

That is ADM's position. I just received it. The title of the press release is "Absolutely essential that Aéroports de Montréal maintain property reserve at Montréal-Mirabel to provide for future development." I am telling this to the NDP members who are also listening to us.

It continues:

Mr. Cherry went on to add that the 11,000 acre property reserve was, at present, used essentially for agricultural purposes and that the rent collected from farmers totalled \$15,000 per month, which is to say, an average monthly rent of \$130 for each of the 127 lots. For Aéroports de Montréal, the gross income derived from the rental of these lots represents less than one tenth of 1% of total corporate income, without any consideration of the cost of administering these leases.

I will continue because it is important for hon. members to know this. I hope this will make them change their minds.

Aéroports de Montréal has offered to extend farmers' leases through to 2023.

That is what I was saying earlier. This comes from an ADM press release. It is clear that ADM is telling us in this press release that was just published and part of which I just read in this House, that it is against what the Conservative Party is offering today in this House. That is the ADM position.

Who created ADM? It was Brian Mulroney, at the time, and his minister Mr. Corbeil. Who appointed all the members to the board of directors at the time? The same group. Who, today, is asking to undo everything and to break the commitments, contracts and agreements with ADM, and to interrupt ADM's plans for the future? The same Conservative Party, if we say can that Conservatives today are the direct descendants of those who were here at the time.

Supply

I know this is a grey area because some of them say they are Brian Mulroney's illegitimate children, others say they are legitimate children. Nonetheless, I had nothing to do with the marriage agreement that created this second generation of Conservatives and I certainly did not witness the event. The fact remains that the same political party that signed the agreement with ADM is now asking to go back on that agreement and ADM has issued a press release to say, "No".

I invite all the hon. members in this House, especially those from the Conservative Party, to explain to us what they have just done. There is only one explanation: it is opportunism pure and simple. They are not looking out for the interests of Canadians, Quebec, or Eastern Ontario, and especially not of Mirabel.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell—

Hon. Don Boudria: I am very appreciative.

Mr. Richard Harris: Yes, well, it was an ordeal at times, Mr. Speaker, because I generally have a lot of respect for the member and I certainly was interested in hearing what he would say.

I was really disappointed in his presentation. Only for a very short time during his speech today did the member deal with the people affected by this expropriation. He tried to get as far away as he possibly could from the wrong that was caused back then during the expropriation.

Yes, he talked about things that are going on at Mirabel and he talked about the Conservatives. He did not mention that it was the Progressive Conservative Party of the time that actually got 80,000 acres back into the agricultural mix. This land is now being worked.

As the member knows, the Progressive Conservatives were trying to do whatever they could to make the best out of a really bad mistake made by the Liberals. Mirabel is the biggest white elephant in the history of this country, I believe, but no, not quite, the EH-101s probably are.

However, I want to get to the point here. The member talked about the expropriation process. He said "this did not happen in a legal vacuum". Probably not. There are provisions under the Expropriation Act which ensure that people get compensation.

However, there is one thing missing in that act and that is the right of people who do not want to sell to refuse, people who want to stay on their land, who want to stay with the dream they had to have a farm for their generation and generations to come. That right of saying, "No, I do not want to sell", is not in there.

The Trudeau government of the day used the Expropriation Act and whatever cabinet powers they had, in my opinion, because of the price they paid, which was about \$200 an acre, to basically cheat the landowners out of their property. I use that word because they got it at bargain basement prices. The Trudeau government knew what it was doing, because not a year later down in Pickering they were prepared to pay about \$2,000 an acre for raw farmland.

It clearly shows that the government took advantage of the people living in the Mirabel area. They took advantage to plunder their farms for what turned out to be a very bad investment. The government just refused to recognize the wrong.

Our party wants to talk about the future of the families that wanted to stay there and the people who still want to get back so they can have their future as well.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, first, the hon. member points out that I did not talk about the Roch LaSalle fiasco. Of course, I did. I can confirm there was a fiasco under the then minister Roch LaSalle. We are all aware of that, and I talked about it at length in my remarks. If I did not talk about it long enough, I would be happy to repeat that there was indeed a fiasco.

But I do not agree with the hon. member that there is some kind of absolute property right and that expropriation can always be refused. That is what he implied. It is impossible.

All those who live in an area where a road had to be made wider, where a freeway was built or high voltage power lines had to be installed, something which happened many times in my province, especially under a Conservative provincial government, all those who have been through that know very well that there is no such thing as an absolute right to property. Saying the contrary is nonsense.

The hon. member then said we should talk about the future. I have just done that. I read the ADM press release that just came out. It talks about the future of this region and says how important it is to keep the property reserve for the future of the airport. This is the future.

It is what we have been told by those who made the 60 year lease agreement. They are the ones who signed it. I had nothing to do with that. The Conservative government of the day signed it. Not a single Liberal was involved. This 60 year lease agreement was signed by the Conservatives, and ADM is now asking us to abide by this agreement.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague opposite knows very well, 90 per cent of the people working at Mirabel live in my riding of Rivière-du-Nord. Mirabel is critically important for the economy of our riding. All that went on in the past has seriously harmed the economy of Saint-Jérôme. People who worked in Mirabel lived in Saint-Jérôme, but the transfer of flight passengers to Dorval has killed a whole economy. I have received in my riding office people who were complaining and talking about the disastrous impact of what was going on at Mirabel.

We should not forget that Mirabel is an extraordinary airport, one of the best in the world. It provides the highest quality services. What happened there is abominable.

Routine Proceedings

There now are 17,000 acres of available land. However, there is considerable concern about preserving space. They decided to keep 6,000 acres. To give you an idea, 6,000 acres is twice the area of Dorval. I think this is enough for the future. The remaining 11,000 acres should be given back. Besides, farmers do not want free land; they want to buy it because they need it.

It is very difficult to get a bank loan for land development. We have to be realistic. The hon. member knows that because he has a few farmers in his riding. I am convinced he is aware of that. We cannot invest in land that we do not own, because you never know what the future holds.

This is why we have this motion and why we are discussing this issue on this opposition day. At the end of the day, people are waiting to see what will happen. The hon. member cannot be indifferent to this.

I ask him to react and to do so in a conscientious way, rather than attacking Conservatives. I know this is all part of the game, but in my community this is not what is happening. There is a human reality that he does not talk much about. I would like his comments on that.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am not questioning what the hon. member has done to protect her riding. There are only two ridings between hers and mine. Hers is a region that I often visit and we have had many informal discussions about that in the House.

I too have met many people from the Mirabel area. Union members came to see me in my office to exchange notes on issues I had raised or letters I had written to ministers back when the decision was made to keep passengers away from Mirabel airport. That decision was extremely unpopular in my riding.

Actually, I remember saying then that highway 50 had finally been completed on practically the same day the airport was closed. Hon. members will remember that new lanes had been added between Lachute and Mirabel while the small section between Mirabel and highway 15 was already built. It was that section, between Mirabel and Lachute, that was incomplete. It was completed at just about the same time. Maybe not exactly on the same day, but give or take a few weeks.

However, our opinions differ when the hon. member says that we must return some of that land to the expropriated people and keep the rest. The following is not from me, but from Mr. James Cherry from ADM. I will quote a sentence I did not read earlier. Mr. James Cherry, CEO of Aéroports de Montréal, said the following:

In the event passenger flights are transferred to Montréal-Mirabel, there is no doubt that the two current runways would not suffice—there are presently three in operation at Montréal-Trudeau—and that we would be obligated to build at least two others. By maintaining our property reserve of 4450 hectares (11 000 acres), we are safeguarding the future of the Montréal-Mirabel facility. To sell back the land at this time would be an error with serious consequences for both Aéroports de Montréal and the Mirabel area.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1550)
[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all the parties and if you seek it I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study of the 2004 Fraser River sockeye salmon harvest, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Richmond, B.C. from December 1 to 5, 2004, and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Motion agreed to)

● (1555)
[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.) moved:

That, further to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, this House instructs the Standing Committee on Finance to make recommendations relating to the provision of independent fiscal forecasting advice for Parliamentarians, including the consideration of the recommendations of the external expert.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, further to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, this House instructs the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to recommend measures that would ensure that all future uses of the employment insurance program would only be for the benefit of workers and not for any other purpose.

(Motion agreed to)

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, further to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, this House instructs the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to recommend a process that engages citizens and parliamentarians in an examination of our electoral system with a review of all options.

Supply

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—MIRABEL AIRPORT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin I should advise the House that I will be sharing my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

It has been an interesting day as members of the House have stood and asked the government to do the right thing, which seems to have been the message throughout the day.

Today we are talking about Mirabel airport. I have listened to the minister on the other side. On the one hand he tells us that they may need the land for future industrial development. On the other hand, and more so, I have heard him talk about contracts that were signed by a former Progressive Conservative government dealing with the leasing of the land.

We accept that those do exist. However it is not a big stretch of the imagination and somewhat farcical that the government would use that argument. When the Liberals took power back in 1993 they had no problems in tearing up some contracts with suppliers of helicopters and an agreement that was going to take place with respect to another airport in Toronto. Breaking contracts is not new to them. We are not asking the government to break a contract. Contracts can be negotiated and changes made.

Interestingly, on this particular issue I would like to draw the government's attention to a quote from the current Minister of Public Works who said back in September, "The truth is that being a landlord is not a core business of government, nor should it be".

We agree with that with respect to this land.

The former prime minister, the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, used to speak of his desire to create a just society in Canada. If the expropriation of land around Mirabel airport and the accompanying blatant disregard for the population of this region is representative of that idea of justice, then it is unfortunate that Dorval airport and not the Mirabel airport was named after him.

Mirabel airport, which is located about 55 kilometres northeast of Montreal, is a prime example of the incompetence of the Liberal government spending spree this country has had to endure over the years. It is a white elephant that must be laid to rest. It remains nothing more than a testament to Liberal arrogance, waste and mismanagement of taxpayer money.

Of the 97,000 acres, and that is a huge expanse of land, that were expropriated, only 5% has been used for the actual airport. Eleven thousand acres sit unused. Six thousand acres are fenced in and this part alone could accommodate two airports the size of the current Dorval airport. Current forecasts show that it may not come to anyone's use until the year 2030-35.

In 1969 the Liberal government demonstrated a callous disregard for the population of this region when it failed to properly inform them of the decision to expropriate their lands. This was a first in a series of draconian measures initiated by that Liberal government, which included the unnecessary destruction of property and the maintenance of land which was not being used for the airport and probably never will be used by the airport.

What is truly astonishing is the fact the government paid the land occupants a mere \$210 an acre in 1969.

Then in 1970, only a year later, the same government offered to pay \$2,000 per acre to expropriate land for the airport they were planning to construct in Pickering, Ontario. I ask the House: Is that equality?

We sit here today as parliamentarians and wonder why our relationship with Quebec is in trouble. Over 3,000 families were affected by the initial expropriation. That is a truly astounding number of families to be expropriated in one region of our country.

Even worse, these families found out by a news flash on the radio. Can anyone imagine hearing on the radio that one's property has been expropriated. Many of these families saw their houses needlessly destroyed, along with most of the area's infrastructure. During the moving period many people were victims of looting or saw their family homes set on fire so that local firefighters could practise their firefighting skills. Compensation was not only inadequate but it was often involuntarily accepted. Little compensation was offered for the upheaval this created in people's lives.

As a result, many people in the area suffered from depression, alcohol abuse and suicides were not uncommon. Most of this land, however, was never used by the airport.

Despite all the suffering this community endured in the early 1970s, it is now showing signs of population growth. People are returning. Hope is growing that farming families will get ownership of their land back.

I come from a riding of considerable rural farmland. I can fully appreciate the passion farmers have for their land. Farmland in my riding is passed down through the generations. This is no different for the people of Mirabel. They take pride in their land and work it with their blood, sweat and tears.

In my riding farmers are the best stewards of the land. It would be incomprehensible to imagine politicians expropriating them from their land and then lease it back to them so they can continue to earn a livelihood.

● (1600)

Why should the people affected by the Mirabel airport be expected to feel any different?

Unfortunately, despite the unnecessary sacrifice of these people, it was not until Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government that any of the excess expropriations were returned.

Routine Proceedings

Rather than admit it had made a mistake in taking so much land, the Liberal government has needlessly insisted on holding on to this land, thereby perpetuating its mistreatment of these people. The Liberal-Bloc-Liberal Minister of Transport has demonstrated his particular version of support for the people of Mirabel this morning. He has failed to demonstrate why he wants to hold onto this land. He prefers to be a landlord and collect the lease payments many farmers are paying today.

Pearson airport in Toronto, we have heard, operates a world class facility on a mere 4,200 acres. Heathrow in London, England operates on 2,700. Los Angeles operates with 3,500. Yet the Minister of Transport feels the need to hang on to 11,000 acres for a cargo facility.

The agricultural value of this region of Quebec is at risk. It is time to stop leasing the land to farmers and give them their rightful ownership of the land.

My party continues to fight for the rights of rural Canadians on many different fronts. In a time of such sensitivity to equal rights for all Canadians, I am saddened to see such a stubborn attitude being shown by the party opposite.

Perhaps it is time that I turn our attention to another minister. I have already indicated the Minister of Public Works who, in his own words, supports our party's position. On September 21, as I have already said, the Minister of Public Works stated:

The truth is, being a landlord is not a core business of government, nor should it be.

The Minister of Public Works clearly supports what we are saying today, as he has always agreed with us in the past. His Conservative values occasionally shine through the rainbow of despair found on the government side of the House. He fully understands the dignity and value of property rights; at times it is as though he never really left.

At a time when we are asking Canadian farmers not to give up on farming, it is downright pitiful to watch a tired old Liberal government hold onto its dreams of the past. If there is anything the government should recognize, it is that farmers are always in need of prosperous land. Here is an opportunity to do the right thing.

Perhaps reluctance to do the right thing in this particular situation and return ownership of the land to the people of Mirabel is a form of punishment for the less than favourable election results the Liberals received last summer.

The bottom line is that the Government of Canada should not be a landlord. If the government supports Canadian farmers as it claims, it should return the land to the farmers of the Mirabel region. After all, this land is not being used by the airport and has never been used by the airport. Because the government has no future plan for the land, it does make one speculate as to what it wants this land for in the future.

What do the Liberals hope to do with it? Use it as a landfill site for Montreal or Toronto? Who knows? We on this side of the House know the land is better off in the hands of farmers who have fought for this land and worked this land for generations and continue to

hold out hope that ownership will be returned to them and their children.

Selling this land back to these families does not make up for over 30 years of psychological trauma and the Liberal Party's inability to admit to its errors. It does not restore valued possessions and souvenirs to these families. It does not make up for the years of mistreatment and abuse. It is, however, the least the government can do to rectify its abominable treatment of these Canadian citizens.

It is a sad spectacle for Canadians to again watch their government fail to demonstrate leadership and instead have to be shamed into doing the right thing. As I stand here today before the House, the Government of Canada is leasing land to the farmers it took it from. If the Government of Canada is not in the landlord business, it should demonstrate that by making the return of ownership of this farmland a priority.

From what the House has heard today from the government, it is clearly in denial. Mirabel is closed to passenger traffic. It will never expand. However, it can become a vital benchmark in reversing the mistakes of governments past. Land rights are something that all Canadians accept as a basic right.

• (1605)

We should assure Canadians of the future that we can never make these types of mistakes again. I therefore call upon all members of the House to do the right thing and support the motion.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

UKRAINE ELECTIONS

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations with all parties and if you seek it I believe you would find unanimous consent of the House to put the following motion forward. I move:

That, in the opinion of this House and based on the observations of several thousand international observers, including observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, NATO, and the United States, as well as the observations of approximately 100 Canadian observers and two Canadian Parliamentary delegations; a concerted, systemic and massive fraud has been committed by the current regime and the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine against the will of the people of Ukraine;

That, based on the above mentioned observations, the electoral commission does not have a legitimate basis for declaring Mr. Yanukovich the winner of the presidential election;

That, in the event that President Kuchma and the Government of Ukraine do not ensure that the democratic will of the Ukrainian people is respected, the Government of Canada shall consider the introduction of appropriate and effective measures, mindful of the impact on the people of Ukraine and will seek the cooperation on such measures with the international community.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member have the consent of the House to present the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—MIRABEL AIRPORT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague for his speech, but there was some mention of previous prime ministers and previous ministers. For the record, I want to go back and look at the long term lease and how the Conservatives handled it.

We cannot forget what happened during the 1980s when the Mulroney government decided to cede large portions of the Mirabel land. I know my colleague was not here at that time, but I was. The Tories started by appointing a minister's cousin to sell the land and then a Conservative organizer was able to buy some of the expropriated land at 30% of the market value and sold it one day later for an overall profit of \$252,000, it was reported.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member appears to be reading from a document and he is saying that he is stating facts. Is it in order to ask the member to table the document from which he is getting that information?

• (1610)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary is presenting a case. He is making an occasional quote, but I do not think he is reading or quoting from a particular document. He is just posing his question. I would ask the parliamentary secretary to continue.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, as one of the hon. member's colleagues said, these are the new improved Tories. I am wondering if my hon. colleague was there in April to witness what their leader said, "My idol, Brian Mulroney". I am not sure, but that is fine.

An hon. member: Who is this guy? I have never seen him in the House before. What is he doing here?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: My question is, does the member remember the deal that was flipped? Does he remember how the Canadian public was swindled? Does he realize that the cost to the government, the cost to the Canadian taxpayers, was over \$100 million? Does he realize that?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for whatever the question was, dealing with some time in the past. I appreciate that he has been here a long time and has a lot more experience than I do, and I give him a lot of credit for that, again for whatever that means.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: The fact of the matter is, if he would pay attention, we are asking him to do the right thing today. We are not talking about 20 years ago. We are talking about 2004. We are asking

him to do the right thing now because wrong things may or may not have been done, and it is not for me to judge whether they were. It does not really matter: do the right thing now. That is no reason to hold on to the property now to keep it out of the hands of the people who rightfully own it. Give it back to those people. They will buy it. They want it back. They are farmers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to ask a question of my Conservative colleague. He is well aware that the Liberal government was maintaining the ownership over 11,000 acres of land that were not used for the operation of the airport. There is a whole industrial complex close to the Mirabel airport that represents 6,000 acres of land. There are currently 2,140 acres that are still available for industrial development. This is the reality.

Consequently, I ask my Conservative colleague to tell me how the government should act. In 1992, the lease that was signed was for the operation of a major industrial airport. Since then, the Liberals changed the operation plan twice, precisely so that it would no longer become a major industrial airport, as it was supposed to be in 1992.

Thus, they changed the nature of the lease. It is high time today that the Liberals correct the situation and give the 11,000 acres back to farmers.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my Bloc friend from Mirabel. He certainly understands the situation far better than the government side does. There are agreements that have been signed for purposes—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Are you in agreement with that?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: It is not being used for that purpose. You did not expropriate the land for that purpose.

My friend from the Bloc is absolutely right. I would say in answer to the question from my friend from the Bloc that the leases are for a certain purpose. If they are not being used for that certain purpose, then the lease is not being fulfilled. He is absolutely right.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on this issue as the public works critic for the official opposition and the former transport critic for the official opposition. I support the motion which states:

That the House call on the government to take the appropriate measures to sell the 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel Airport.

The simple fact that this issue is being discussed in the House of Commons should concern all of us. We are talking about a decision to return surplus land to the farmers from whom it was expropriated nearly 30 years ago. Various Canadians might well propose other topics for us to discuss today, but few issues have Mirabel's power to confirm Liberal arrogance, Liberal mismanagement, and the Liberal's continuing inability to plan for the future.

Supply

[Translation]

The municipality of Mirabel was created in 1971 by the amalgamation of 14 municipalities. It was a consequence, mainly, of the decision by Prime Minister Trudeau, on March 28, 1969, to build an international airport in Sainte-Scholastique.

Montreal was booming. Two years earlier, it had hosted Expo 67 and it was to host the 1976 Olympic Games. The Mirabel airport was to be the symbol of the future of this region.

An announcement which Transport ran in an issue of the *Forces* magazine proclaimed that Mirabel would be “the gateway to America” and was “the airport of the future today”.

In 1967, air traffic was growing at an annual rate of 19%, and Mirabel was supposed to undergo a phenomenal expansion to be able to accommodate 40 million travellers annually by 2000. Mirabel was supposed to become a North American hub.

Planning was almost perfect. There was to be a rapid rail link, two autoroutes worthy of the name, autoroutes 13 and 15, and a third one to link the airport with Hull and Ottawa.

In order to avoid the noise problems that spelled trouble for the operation of the Concorde at JFK airport in New York, and that were soon to be a problem for night flights in Dorval, they suggested a site that was 60 kilometres away from downtown Montreal.

The Liberal government of the time was planning to spend \$1.5 billion to build a state of the art airport in a rural setting, far from residential areas, modeled on the new Dallas-Fort Worth airport in the US, which today is one of the main hubs of air traffic in that country.

Claiming it wanted to reduce the risk of prosecution as a result of noise by taking over a territory nearly as big as the city of Montreal, the federal Liberal government forced 3,200 families out of their homes. Some 12,000 people were directly affected.

Initially 97,000 acres were expropriated, a territory bigger than Laval island, to built Mirabel airport on the most productive arable lands in Quebec. Officials at the department of Transport virtually destroyed the economic life of a score of villages. Worse yet, Mirabel never really got off the ground.

At the official opening, on October 14, 1975, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau said it was the project of the century. The Mirabel airport facilities include a one million square foot terminal, a 350 room hotel, an eight storey office building and a multi-level parking garage for 5,000 cars. Mirabel was used by airlines from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Spain, Ireland, India, Italy, Morocco, Scandinavia and Switzerland as well as England, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Unfortunately the latter are the only countries with airlines still flying to Montreal.

Of course, Mirabel was affected by the oil crisis of the 1970s, the first hijackings and the recession. That contributed to the slowing down of the airline industry. Political instability in Quebec in the 1980s did not help either. In fact, during its busiest year ever, in 1990, Mirabel only handled 2.5 million passengers, a far cry from the more than 25 million planned in 1967. When studying the

situation at Mirabel, it is very easy to blame political and economic factors such as the oil crisis, terrorism or Quebec separatists.

•(1615)

And yet, the other major airports of the world faced similar problems and despite the challenges of the IRA in London, Heathrow airport continued to grow.

All things considered, I believe that Mirabel's failure comes as a direct result of the federal Liberal government's policies. The original project never was completed. The high-speed rail shuttle between Mirabel and downtown Montreal never made it off the planner's drawing board and highway 13 was never completed. These links would have been justified had it been decided to concentrate in Mirabel all passenger flights, domestic, transborder and international.

In fact, the federal government proposed an incredibly stupid solution. Montreal was to have two airports. Mirabel airport would be used for international flights and Dorval airport, renamed Pierre Elliott Trudeau, would handle transborder and international flights.

I am not an airline manager, but I know the “hub” concept because I live near Vancouver. Passengers arrive on a nonstop flight from Boston and connect with a nonstop flight to Osaka. Other passengers arrive from Kelowna and take off for Sydney, Australia. A high percentage of the passengers in Vancouver airport are on a longer trip and Vancouver airport is only a connection point on their trip. The term “hub” applies to Vancouver airport.

The situation in Montreal, however, discouraged the local airports from becoming a hub. Travellers flying from Calgary to Europe had to land at Dorval, claim their luggage, take a taxi to Mirabel, check their bags in again, and then fly from there to Europe. Neither Mirabel nor Dorval was a hub, and the existence of two limited-use airports in one city prevented Montreal from becoming a hub.

As for the situation in other parts of the world, Amsterdam, with a population of 1.5 million, has an international airport, Schipol, and close to 40 million passengers fly through it annually. Paris, however, with a population of 10.5 million, handles 48 million passengers in a year through Charles de Gaulle, its main airport. While Paris has seven times the population of Amsterdam, its main airport handles only 20% more passenger traffic.

Very few international travellers will not recognize Amsterdam as one of the major European hubs. The impressive statistics for Charles de Gaulle reflect the status of the city of light as a tourist destination, as well as the importance of the French capital within the European Union, the Francophonie and a major jumping off point for the Maghreb.

Similarly, Montreal, while the headquarters of Air Canada, Air Transat and Jetsgo, is not really a hub. These three airlines have selected Toronto as their main base and hub.

Quite simply, the federal policy of maintaining two major airports in Montreal is the main reason for the failure of Mirabel. This is why we are here today discussing Mirabel.

I will end with two statements of principle. First of all, the Conservative Party is in favour of having a Canadian airline industry that is strong, competitive in every part of the globe, capable of carrying Canadians to any destination within a system that is efficient and serves the interests of both travellers and taxpayers.

Second, we are on the side of those who are now on Mirabel property. They chose to purchase land that had been expropriated by the government, which has not assumed its responsibilities toward them. We respect their right to their property.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I served with the member on the transport committee and I know he is very knowledgeable about transport issues.

This particular debate has twiggged a lot of interest because there are a lot of facts that many Canadians, in fact many parliamentarians, were not aware of. It has a long history and has been placed on the table for all to bring themselves up to speed about some of the decisions that were taken.

What is not terribly clear to me, and maybe the member can help, is the rationale. One person does not make such decisions. The member knows how complex it is for long term planning for air traffic and the conditions that existed back then, and how they have changed enormously now. Even the expansion at Pearson has been a complex issue.

At the time that the Mirabel concept was being put forward and the details became public, was there anybody who said there might be a problem? The second question is with regard to the 11,000 acres that remain. In terms of the future viability of Mirabel, if there is a future viability, will those 11,000 acres be necessary for future expansion?

• (1625)

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, Pearson airport is near Mississauga, my colleague's constituency, so he takes a great interest in these things. He was also very constructive on the transport committee.

The province of British Columbia is preparing for the 2010 Olympic Games and there are some grand ideas, grand schemes, and grand projects with regard to transportation. We see it in British Columbia on the land side. There were some rumblings and some concerns.

Ultimately, the choice of the federal government to have two airports with no proper distinguishing features between the two, or to choose one as an international airport and one as a domestic airport with the proper international certification under the Chicago convention, caused a lot of problems in the expansion of Mirabel Airport in a way that was conducive to the situation there.

There were voices on the ground at the time. There were some people who are still members of the Liberal Party and of course Otto Lang was involved in discussions at the time. There was fierce

Supply

debate but not a lot of it was spoken in public. There were no public discussions about it partly because people were wrapped up in the spirit of 1967 and the spirit of 1976.

My colleague's second question was with regard to the motives of bringing up this issue and what we do now. There is a concern about this. I have concern about this. The transport minister has said that this land may be used in the future for testing by Bombardier, for example, of certain jets and rocket engines that need vast stretches of land.

I had dinner with some representatives from Bombardier last night and I posed this question to them directly. I asked them if selling the land at Mirabel would pose any problems for them and they said, and I do not think they would have any problem with me saying this publicly, that they have more land than they need right now. They have more opportunity for research and development. They have more capacity than they can fill with what Bombardier is trying to fulfill right now.

The selling of these lands is not only the right thing to do, but it makes sense from the industry side, from the compassionate side, and from the side of the people who live near Mirabel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I shall ask a brief question.

The hon. member recognizes the fact that the Liberal Party decided to build an airport right in the middle of agricultural land, right in the fields, and that it decided not to go ahead with highway 13, highway 50 or the fast train.

Would he agree with me that after September 11, 2001, the opposite decision should have been made, namely keeping Mirabel open and closing Dorval? That should have been the solution as early as 1985, because that was the date at which the government was to make the decision. However, in 1982 the Liberals decided otherwise. Would it not have been the proper solution to close Dorval and concentrate on developing Mirabel to the maximum?

[*English*]

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, when I was on the transport committee and the transport critic for the opposition, I spent a lot of time looking at airports and the air industry in Canada. It is very difficult in retrospect to look back 20 years and say that the government should have closed this one or that one.

We are having our own issues in the province of British Columbia right now with having rapid transit to and from our airport. Many people may not know that the Vancouver International Airport is located in Richmond, which is quite a traffic jam away from the downtown core of Vancouver.

Supply

In retrospect, should they have? It is hard to say. Again, as I say, we are 20 years removed, and where we go in the future with that region is a very difficult choice. I think the Dorval Airport is a world class airport, although it has some incredible problems with the immigration system and how it is set up at the airport. The physical setup is not as top of the line as it should be for an airport as important as it is. However, that speaks to a larger problem that the government has in not planning properly for our air industry.

Therefore, we support giving the land back, respecting the farmers, respecting people of Mirabel and respecting people of that region. We still will have enough land, if we do want to resuscitate the airport and have a second world class airport in the province of Quebec. Then we could—

• (1630)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. 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 Selkirk—Interlake, Terrorism; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, Justice; the hon. member for Calgary West, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on this motion. First I have a personal story to tell.

The first time I took an airplane at Mirabel airport, I had to stay there 24 hours because the only flight from Mirabel to Vancouver had been cancelled. And so I spent 24 hours in that airport. There were not many people about, day or night. During those 24 hours, the Canadian taxpayers spent \$55,000. With better planning, that airport might have worked, but it was empty.

When I look at it, I think we can compare it to other policies of the Liberal government. We have a child care system that is empty and lacks funding. Our health care system is empty and lacks funding. Government business is also empty in that way.

Unfortunately, Mirabel is a metaphor for many of the Liberal government's bad decisions. The motion by the Conservative Party, supported by the Bloc and the NDP, calls on the government to take the appropriate measures to sell the 4,500 hectares or 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel airport.

At first glance, this motion makes a lot of sense. We know that the history of Mirabel airport is marred by one of the most useless major expropriations in Canada's history. We are well aware that farmers in that region fought hard against the federal government, precisely to avoid the situation in which we now find ourselves.

The federal government's decision to have this airport built on the site of the village of Sainte-Scholastique and to expropriate 39,255 hectares of Quebec's best farmland wreaked havoc on the lives of 3,000 owners and their families.

Of course, Expo 67 and the euphoria that followed had generated a great deal of enthusiasm across the country. We also had big

projects with the Olympic Games coming to Montreal. These were nothing but good intentions for the future of Montreal and for the development of modern infrastructures to increase Canada's accommodation capacity, which is essential to our prosperity. These were of course good intentions, in the context of an election for the Liberal government.

However, we are well aware that good intentions do not make a good government. As we can see whenever an election is held, the federal government's good intentions or promises, whether they relate to health, post-secondary education, child poverty or the homeless in Canada, lack direction and are not followed by action.

The road to Mirabel was full of good intentions, but things did not work. Indeed, the road to Mirabel quickly became a road to hell for the 3,000 people who had been expropriated, for the communities displaced and disturbed by the presence of the airport. A total of 12,000 people were affected by this major displacement. This quickly became a road to hell because of the government's mismanagement, at the expense of taxpayers. A lot of money and a lot of hopes were wasted on Mirabel.

How do we explain this administrative disaster, this Liberal mismanagement? There are a number of reasons. First, there was a rivalry between the Liberal government of Mr. Bourassa and the Liberal government of Mr. Trudeau. Mr. Bourassa wanted to build the airport close to Drummondville and then help Quebec City benefit from it, while the federal government was more interested in helping Ottawa and the surrounding region. So, Mirabel was a compromise and neighbouring communities were the victims of that compromise.

• (1635)

There was also a very bad business plan. According to experts hired by the federal government, passenger traffic through the new Montreal airport should have been four million in its first year, six million in 1980, 10 million in 1985 and 40 million in 2000.

In fact, 94,000 passengers passed through the airport in 1975, 1.4 million in 1980, and there were never more than 2.5 million a year. Thus, only half of the passengers the Liberals anticipated passed through the airport in its first year. Clearly, it is not just in estimating surpluses that the Liberal government makes mistakes.

Economic uncertainty in the 1970s saw a decline in Montreal's commercial importance and caused an exodus of corporations to Toronto, to the benefit of Lester B. Pearson Airport. Other colleagues have already mentioned that.

As always, it is difficult for the Liberal Party to admit its mistakes. It was Brian Mulroney's Conservative government that pointed out the mistakes of the Liberal government, just as it was the Liberal government in 1993 that pointed out the mistakes made by Mr. Mulroney's Conservative government. And we still remember the promises that were nothing more than promises.

It was not until 1985 that the newly elected Mr. Mulroney returned 32,000 hectares of land. The airport was using only 2,000 of the 39,000 hectares. This measure only made sense because 95% of the expropriated land had never been used. What a waste.

Supply

Unfortunately, at the same time, Mr. Mulroney's Conservatives also handed over the management of the airports to an independent corporation, which complicated the legal issue underlying restitution of the remaining surplus of expropriated land. We all know that ADM is accountable only to itself. The Liberals favour this type of body that reports to no one and does not hold public consultations.

We know that the Conservatives also have a lot of experience in building white elephants. And there were plenty of them. The record deficits of the 1980s were mentioned earlier, but record deficits go further back than that. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the Liberals and the Conservatives produced quite a number of white elephants.

We can think of the infamous Diefenbunker, built to protect federal government against a nuclear attack. Over \$20 million dollars were wasted in 1961—which translates into over \$100 million in 2004—on a shelter that was, in reality, merely a political one.

Mr. Diefenbaker had decided to forego the building of the Avro Arrow fighter plane, a 100% Canadian technological gem, in order to build a shelter that was quickly made obsolete by new military technology. The Conservative legacy is not necessarily better than the Liberal's. Before I go back to Mirabel, I want to point out that this shelter is now a museum. They even considered growing mushrooms there. Both parties have pretty bad records when it comes to financial management.

Going back to Mirabel, initial costs were estimated at \$425 million, or \$2.3 billion in today's terms. On opening day, costs had skyrocketed to \$1.5 billion, or \$5.5 billion in 2004 dollars. The costs had indeed doubled. Five years after opening day, Mirabel had a \$20 million annual deficit.

I mentioned earlier that the 24 hours I spent at Mirabel cost \$55,000 to Canadian taxpayers.

• (1640)

[*English*]

I would like to pass to another disturbing development that could indicate another Mirabel. It is the question of the RAV line in British Columbia. We were told a few months ago, by the B.C. Liberal provincial government, that this particular development, the RAV line, would not cost a penny more than \$1.55 billion in public funds.

We have recently heard that the low bid on that particular project, that is receiving both federal and provincial funding, is actually \$343 million above that limit, above which the taxpayer would not be responsible for a cent. We have moved from \$1.55 billion to \$1.9 billion. We know as well for this project, this white elephant in British Columbia, that 90% of any ridership shortfall will be picked up by the taxpayers. It is appalling that this has been pushed by both the federal Liberals and the provincial Liberals. This indeed could be another white elephant.

[*Translation*]

Coming back to Mirabel, we can look at the needs of our population which are being ignored, needs in health for seniors or for people with disabilities. And funding is insufficient for our education system. During the election campaign, I met dozens of young people in my riding, who never considered pursuing a post-secondary

education because of this lack of funding and the enormous debt they would have by the time they got out of college or university.

Yesterday, I met with a delegation of students from my riding. These students told me they were deep in debt. This situation is largely due to the cuts and tax reductions that benefited those who need them least.

When we think about the state of our environment, and the toxic waste poisoning our communities and our children, the taxpayers' money can certainly be put to other use. The Diefenbunker and the Mirabel airport are two monuments of the mediocrity of the Conservative and Liberal governments' policies.

At present, the federal government still owns 8,000 hectares in the Mirabel area. We know very well that it does not need that much land. Ottawa could sell between 5,000 and 6,000 hectares back to the farmers and their communities, to contribute in a way to the revival of these communities affected by the forced expropriation in the 1970s.

But the Liberal government persists in refusing to give away more land to farmers in Mirabel. Yet, contrary to what it says, the federal has some room to manoeuvre. In the worst case and with one of the most optimistic scenarios about the future of Mirabel, like the one proposed by the Transport Minister, 3,000 hectares will be more than enough for the airport.

With 3,000 hectares, Mirabel would still remain one of the largest airports in the world. There will be room for Bombardier and dreams. There will be room for the good intentions of the Transport Minister, but there will be no room for wasting the public's money. We need more efficient management of public funds. If we keep 3,000 hectares and sell the rest of the land, and this is the most important aspect, we will also have room for the communities affected.

The Liberal government should not forget that it is important to acknowledge the errors it made in the past, otherwise the communities in Mirabel will continue to suffer unnecessarily.

It will keep those lands and continue to waste money. At the same time, we know that many important needs are being ignored in the name of so-called fiscal responsibility. How hypocritical.

Everyone knows that Mirabel was a fiasco. No one would dare deny this without being ridiculed. It is high time that the situation be remedied once and for all.

The citizens of Mirabel's communities lost their lands and their community, in many cases unnecessarily. Thirty-four years later, they are still waiting.

It is high time to pay unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to the community of Mirabel what is Mirabel's.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the NDP recognizes what today's debate is all about. It is an effort by the Conservatives to team up with the Bloc Quebecois and nothing more.

Supply

The land surrounding Mirabel is under lease. The Conservatives know this. The Conservatives signed the deal. I ask the hon. member of the NDP to recognize today's motion for being nothing more than what it is. It is a partisan ploy that will do little for the rights of farmers in Quebec and everything to do with Conservative political grandstanding. We have seen how the Bloc was created in the early nineties. At the time, the Conservative government split and people formed the Bloc.

I ask my hon. friend, does he realize what the NDP is supporting here today? Does he realize that there is nothing else but grandstanding? Does he realize that his party wants to get into bed with the Bloc? I do not know, but those members probably want to form the Conservative Alliance Bloc.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would prefer grandstanding that helps communities in Mirabel to the inaction and forced expropriation by the Liberal government. It is appalling to me that the Liberal government wants to hang on to all of that land, even though the communities have expressly said they would like to go back to farming that land, the most productive in Quebec.

It is very similar to how the Liberals hoard the surplus. They have hoarded \$9 billion. We have seen more and more people in food banks. We have seen more and more families forced out of their homes. We see hospitals closing in my community of New Westminster because of federal cutbacks. There is more and more credit card medicine. We see post-secondary education that is cut off to people in moderate or low incomes.

We are seeing crisis after crisis, disaster after disaster, and all we see from that side of the House is inaction and words. That does not help communities across this country. This motion will, and that is why we support it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Burnaby—New Westminster for his question and his speech on Mirabel. He has understood very well. I warn all communities across Canada, following the rhetoric of the Liberals, who have been in office too long.

Indeed, in 1975, they did not achieve the objectives. However, we must never forget that, when they decided to build the airport in the middle of farm land, they were supposed to complete highway 13; there was supposed to be a high speed train; there was supposed to be highway 50 that linked the national capital to the Mirabel airport. All this was not achieved in 1975.

This means that, before 1975, the Liberals, including those in Quebec, like Mr. Bourassa, already disagreed with the federal Liberals' position. In fact, the Liberals had already decided to kill Mirabel. They still opened it because huge amounts had been invested, billions of dollars, with the result that from the first year Mirabel was never cost effective.

Consequently, I would like members to tell all citizens in Canada and Quebec that the government must no longer act in this way. A community must not be forced today to hand over extra land that was expropriated by a Liberal government that was too greedy, that was unable to get a grip on its spending.

● (1650)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. In my view, the Liberal government wants to save face and that is the root of the problem. The Liberal government wants to keep all those farm lands so that local people cannot access them, simply to save face. They say that they have a project and that it will work. They only act this way because they want to save face. They mismanaged this file from the get-go. They did not do what they should have to make the airport profitable. They squandered taxpayers' money.

Today, they refuse to pass this motion, which all three other parties in the House support, because they want to save face. There is no other reason.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on his comments. His very last comment was that he hoped that the House would support the motion. I can tell the hon. member that the transport committee, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Transport Minister I am sure is aware, has just passed a motion similar to this which calls upon the government to finally admit the mistakes it has made over these last 30 years and begin the process of returning that land to the people who owned it.

I do not know whether the parliamentary secretary mentioned this because I just came into the chamber, but that was supported by all the opposition parties which represent a majority in the 38th Parliament. All the way around the Liberals are the only hold outs and they have been holding out for 30 years. They have refused to say they are sorry to the people whose lives they disrupted. I know many of the people in the Liberal Party and deep down they are sorry, but they are restrained, whether it is the frontbench or they cannot admit that they made this mistake.

I did not hear all of the comments by the parliamentary secretary. I will ask the hon. member, did he hear anything in the comments from the members of the Liberal side acknowledging this terrible mistake that they made 30 years ago and that they have done everything possible to perpetuate this ever since that time?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, no I have not. I have just seen backpedalling and face-saving. The Liberals refuse to admit that a mistake was made and they compound it by pushing back on this very legitimate motion.

The transport committee has adopted a similar motion. I think what is happening is the weight of three-quarters of this minority Parliament is being brought to bear to address something that should have been addressed years ago. Hopefully, we can move on from this to other issues where we can push the government to take action.

I think of the growth in the number of homeless and the growth in child poverty. That is absolutely shameful. We will also work cooperatively with the three-quarters of the House to force a resolution to those questions as well.

Supply

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster today and his reminder about the financial mismanagement and the bad project management record of the Liberal government when it comes to Mirabel. It is surely one of the saddest examples of that sorry history.

This afternoon I listened to a Liberal member try to convince me that 6,000 acres was not enough to run a major airport in North America or anywhere in the world. In fact, he ignored the record that Pearson operates with 4,200 acres; Ottawa with 4,500; Los Angeles has 3,500 acres; Heathrow Airport, a major airport in the world, has only 2,700 acres. They do not seem to suffer from the impossibility of running an excellent operation.

However, I thought about this member's speech and the fact that here was a government that planned an airport that needed 100,000 acres originally. It expropriated that much land and caused that much disruption in the community. It just highlighted for me how little faith I have in the ability of a Liberal member to explain to me what was really needed to run an appropriate airport in this day and age.

I wonder if the member for Burnaby—New Westminster might comment on how the parties compare when it comes to financial management of important projects and other government programs.

• (1655)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member for Burnaby—Douglas raises a very key point. Heathrow actually has less land available than Mirabel would, even though the volume of traffic is immensely larger. It is an important point to underline.

When we come to financial management, the member raises a key point. There is a study that has been done of the last 20 years, from 1981 to 2001, and compares all the major parties and the number of times that those parties have run governments in deficit. These are real terms, not budget, but real terms. Liberals have been in deficit 85% of the time; Conservatives, 66% of the time; and the best record for financial management across the country is the NDP.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, we are here to discuss and debate a motion that reads as follows, and I will read it in French.

[*Translation*]

That the House call on the government to take the appropriate measures to sell the 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel Airport.

It was near Mirabel that I learned the French language. During the 1980s, I lived in Saint-Antoine, very close to Mirabel. I worked in a Giant Tiger store in Saint-Jérôme, east of Mirabel.

It is difficult, for people who do not know this area of Quebec, to realize how big this airport is.

[*English*]

To folks who are not from that area and who mostly speak English, I will try to describe a bit of this. I will tell them about an experience I had when I made a wrong turn one time. I was returning from Laval. I got off the autoroute at the wrong spot and wound up driving on to the territory of Mirabel. I drove down this road through the middle of an absolutely empty countryside for a good 10, 12,

maybe 15 minutes. I finally got to the airport. I was able to turn around at that point and drive all the way back to get on to the autoroute to continue on home.

This is an area that has been completely depopulated. It is two-thirds the size of the sovereign country of Singapore, two-thirds the size of an independent country with several million people. It is completely depopulated as a result of a cabinet decision that was made in 1969 and followed through by the cabinet in 1971, even after it realized it was wrong.

I will be splitting my time, Mr. Speaker.

There were 88,000 acres expropriated, as I say, two-thirds the size of the sovereign country of Singapore, and 3,200 families were forced to move as a result of that expropriation. Only 5,000 acres were used for the airport. As one of my hon. colleagues from the New Democratic Party has pointed out, that is a larger amount of land than is used for Heathrow Airport, the largest and busiest airport in the world. Mirabel has tens of thousands of additional acres that continue not to be used.

As early as January 1971, the Liberal cabinet knew that 22,000 of those acres were not required for the purposes of the airport under any imaginable scenario. Rather than face the public relations embarrassment of having to retract that expropriation, it continued on and depopulated the area of a further 1,700 people who did not need to be moved, but who were forcibly moved to avoid a public relations embarrassment. That is an absolutely astonishing thing to do.

However, this is typical of the attitude that has been taken by that government and by Liberal governments since that time toward private property owners, or even by Liberal governments before that time. After all, it was a Liberal government that in the 1940s that not only rounded up and interned the Japanese Canadians in camps in the interior of B.C. and in other places like Saskatchewan. It also then took their property from them, expropriated it, auctioned it off and then charged the costs of the auctioning against the value of the property. This is the attitude that this government and Liberal governments historically have had toward the private property rights of Canadians.

It seems to me that there are things we could do about this. It is this principled approach that I want to talk about today. It seems to me that we could, as a country, make a decision to ensure that when property is taken by government for a public purpose, adequate compensation is paid. There is no reason why governments should not, when they sense a need, be able to take property from private citizens, as long as compensation is given, compensation that meets certain qualifications. It has to be full compensation. It ought to be timely compensation and it ought to be just compensation.

It is in this spirit that last week I introduced a private member's bill, Bill C-279, which would have the effect of ensuring that the 1960 bill of rights be amended to ensure that no property can be taken unless full, just and timely compensation is given. For greater surety, I have added we want to ensure that the use and enjoyment of property cannot be taken away without full, just and timely compensation.

Supply

We could, in this chamber, make the decision to put that law into effect. If that had been done prior to the beginning of the expropriations in 1969, it would be families would not have been deprived of their property in such an unjust and unfair manner. Indeed, because it would have had to pay the full price for these lands, the government would have been much more circumspect about taking these lands.

As we know, there were considerable pressures from within the cabinet as to the expenses involved in this expropriation. Had those expenses reflected the full cost to the community instead of being imposed on the community, I suggest the government would not have taken all those additional acres, which it knew as of 1971 it did not actually need. The public relations headache, by admitting that it had made a mistake, would have been outweighed by the financial considerations of having to pay the cost of its own actions. That is the value of property rights.

I want to talk for just a moment about some other examples of the kinds of property rights abuses that we see from governments, both federal and provincial, toward Canadian citizens and particularly toward rural Canadians who have so much of their livelihood and well-being tied up in the ownership, use and enjoyment of land.

● (1700)

Zoning laws can have the effect of reducing the use and enjoyment of property, effectively taking away some of the value of property. Environmental laws relating to buffer zones around water courses, for example, and restrictions on the grazing of animals on property can have the effect of reducing the value of that property. That can amount to a de facto expropriation.

Acts, like the Species at Risk Act, which we passed in the House of Commons without adequate compensation provisions for property owners, can have the effect of depriving people of some of the use and enjoyment of their property. That, again, can amount to a de facto confiscation.

The regulations that some provinces, including my own, have passed regarding water filtration requirements can have the effect of causing community halls to be unable to open because they cannot provide the expense of putting in these filtration systems. I have seen this in my own constituency.

All these are effectively restrictions on the value of property without actually taking that property away. That is both unjustifiable and very damaging to the health of our rural communities.

The example that occurred in Mirabel is merely the largest and, if we like, the purest example of this kind of abuse of private property rights. It is not always the case, and it was not the case with those extra acres at Mirabel, but as a rule there is a legitimate public justification for what is being done. I do not think anybody would object to the goal of trying to protect quality in our water courses. I do not think anyone would object, on principle, to the idea of trying to preserve species at risk. Quite the contrary. However, it does seem reasonable that when we take a measure, we ought to accept that we as a government should agree to pay for the cost instead of imposing that cost on the private citizens who have the misfortune to be standing in the way of that public policy.

This respect for their property and their rights ensures that we will see good husbandry of the environment and respect for the law by those who are being affected by these laws. When people know their properties are likely to be confiscated from them or reduced in their value to them, they will try to protect themselves if there is no compensation. However, if the government finds that they have endangered species on their properties, they are far more likely to do what they can to ensure the survival of those species if they know it will not result in their own financial ruin.

I can actually cite an example from Montague Township, in my constituency, where species at risk legislation had the effect of causing someone to lose some of the use of his property. Therefore, he could not subdivide a lot, could not finance his mortgage and he lost his property. Had that property owner known what was coming, I suspect he would have gone out and destroyed the nesting sites of the loggerhead shrike rather than see the loggerhead shrike survive and he lose his property. This kind of thing happens when one does not have respect for property rights.

This is understood in many countries. It is understood, for example, in some countries in Africa, which have had great success by respecting the property rights of local villagers, of their turning their local elephant populations into an asset for them rather into a resource, which is protected at their expense. The result is the countries which have had that kind of respect for property rights have increased elephant populations. We can look around the world at many places for these examples.

● (1705)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. I am very pleased to hear that he used to live in my riding. Unfortunately, Saint-Antoine no longer exists. It has been merged into Saint-Jérôme. It is now a neighbourhood, but it has lost none of its beauty.

I would like him to elaborate somewhat on a specific issue. Does he not find it illogical to ask farmers to invest in lands that are being leased? How does he think these farmers will be able to take out bank loans and acquire equipment to till those lands, when they are merely tenants?

I would like him to elaborate on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a good point that security of tenure and therefore the assurance that one can mortgage one's property is a very important consideration when one is trying to acquire financing in order to make proper use of one's land. This is a very important thing that one ought to try to do, to simply ensure that one has security of tenure.

We see this in many areas of our society. One of the great problems we find with regard to aboriginal communities is that the lack of something that can be hypothecated makes it difficult to get credit.

Supply

Actually one of the great public policy debates we have right now in the area of aboriginal affairs is how to ensure that people can get adequate access to credit. This is true as well for anyone who lacks that security of knowing that the full value of their property exists for them and therefore can be hypothecated on their behalf.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion calls on the government to take appropriate measures to sell 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build Mirabel airport. We are talking about the 11,000 acres.

I think it is important that the members have the whole history of Mirabel. It is a very interesting story and a very good debate. However with regard to the 11,000 acres, the briefing notes that I have indicate that Aéroports de Montréal, ADM, leased the properties, the 5,000 acres for the Mirabel airport and the additional 11,000 of reserve land from the government and it in turn—Mirabel was leased to ADM and then ADM leased it to the farmers with a term to expire in 2010 and an offer was made to go on.

To me this means that the farmers have been farming or have had availability of that land.

An hon. member: They had to pay to farm their own land.

Mr. Paul Szabo: I will finish the question and perhaps the member can clarify it. I need some information.

If the property is presently under the management and control of ADM, how can the federal government sell something that it does not have control over?

• (1710)

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, this is land which is under federal control. The airport authority in Montreal is like any other airport authority. It is under federal regulation. It is effectively a crown agency.

I have to admit I do not know the exact technicalities of it. Part of the problem is that there is the question of certainty that the farmers require. It is conceivable that one can create a lease that amounts to something very close to ownership for the purposes of future planning as to how one is going to use that property.

If for example one does what has been done on federally owned lands in Gatineau Park where people have 99 year leases, many of the same benefits that exist from outright ownership exist.

In this case we see leases that are expiring in the near future. The value of the land itself and therefore any asset that is built on to the land that is not moveable becomes very problematic if one does not have security of tenure. Certain things people can take with them. They can take their tractor for example and move it if they go elsewhere but—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being able to speak to the House on this issue.

Although Montreal, Quebec is a long way from my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, the issue is one which is very close to my heart for a number of reasons. First, it is about farmers and how

they continue to be left behind, ignored and shoved aside by the Liberal government. Second, it is just another example of how the government is thumbing its nose at rural Canada.

There are a number of facts that tell the big picture in this case. That picture is one of men, women and children who are displaced from the land they and their families called home for generations. More than 3,100 farm families, or 10,000 to 12,000 people, were affected by this expropriation. Many farmers over the age of 50 could not find a new job. In one community 80 homes were destroyed and many businesses disappeared. The Department of Transport effectively wiped out the economic life of 10 villages.

It was the largest displacement of people since the deportation of the Acadians. When the land was expropriated, many people fell into depression and suicide was common. This is not just about land. It is about these people, the people who live there and make their living off of it. It is about Canadian farmers who put the food on our tables. If the Liberal government understood that and saw the human side of the situation instead of just the financial side, it would give the land back.

To add insult to injury, people felt they were cheated by the government because it paid them \$210 per acre in 1969. That may have sounded like a reasonable figure at the time, but if one looks at 1970, the very next year, the same government paid \$2,000 an acre to expropriate land for the airport it planned to build in Pickering.

This land was expropriated 35 years ago. This land still has agricultural value and is part of the cultural identity of the region.

There was no good reason for expropriating the land in the first place and now there is no good reason for the government not to sell it to those who wish to buy it back. This airport is closed to passenger traffic and it is highly unlikely that the situation will change in the foreseeable future.

• (1715)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Order. It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put, and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, November 30, 2004 at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, I understood that we were running about 15 minutes behind. Was that an error?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): I was not aware that you were under the impression that we were 15 minutes behind. However, the special order said that at 5:15 p.m. we were to go to the vote and then at 5:30 p.m. we were to go to private members' business.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find consent to see the clock as 5:30 p.m. so that we can move on to private members' business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): May we see the clock as 5:30 p.m.?

Private Members' Business

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, I rise with regard to the request to see the clock as 5:30. I am sure that the opposition might be willing to agree to that if there was unanimous consent given for the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound to finish his speech. I believe he requires a further seven minutes. I would ask for unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to continue for approximately seven minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, that will be more than sufficient time.

As I was saying, there was no good reason for expropriating the land in the first place and now there is no good reason for the government not to sell it to those who wish to buy it back. This airport is closed to passenger traffic and it is highly unlikely that the situation will change in the foreseeable future. Stubbornness and arrogance on the part of the Liberal government and the transport ministry toward farmers is insulting to everyone in the farming community across this country.

Whether one lives in the west, in southern Ontario, or in the east, the situation is the same. Farmers live off their land. It is their home. It is their livelihood. The government had no business taking it away from them. Nor does it have any business keeping it today after having proven to everyone, with the possible exception of itself, that this was a foolish and expensive mistake by a federal Liberal government. It will go down in history as one of the worst human tragedies orchestrated by any Canadian government.

Out of the 97,000 acres expropriated, only 5% of the land has been used for the airport. Eleven thousand acres are still unused and will never be used. Mirabel airport is a white elephant and yet another testament to Liberal arrogance, waste and mismanagement. The Liberals have evaded their responsibilities on the Mirabel file for years, especially when it comes to farmers.

A story in the *Montreal Gazette* in June 2002 said that the government realized in 1970 that it had expropriated far more land than it needed for the airport but went ahead with the expropriation anyway because of worries about lawsuits by residents and fears of giving the Quebec government political ammunition.

This information, which was contained in 1971 cabinet documents, also shows that 22,000 acres of land to the west of the airport were not really needed. It was not until Brian Mulroney was in government when he agreed to sell some of the surplus airport land back to residents that any real agreements were reached.

In Canada and around the world, acres and acres of prime agricultural land are being paved over every day while people all over the globe go hungry. This land sits there needlessly unoccupied. What a terrible waste of land and opportunity. It would be ludicrous for any of us in the House to allow this great travesty to continue.

I speak on behalf of my constituents in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound when I say I sympathize with the farmers who would like to turn the page on this unhappy chapter of their lives.

Now that Mirabel airport is closed to passenger traffic and no extension is planned now, nor will it ever be, the unused farmlands in the area should be given back to the farmers, no questions asked.

• (1720)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put, and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, November 30, 2004 at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

Shall we see the clock as 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): It being 5:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ) moved that Bill C-263, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, let me tell my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and my other colleagues from the House that it is a pleasure for me to lead off the debate on the second reading of Bill C-263. I introduced this bill myself in this House on November 4. It provides for an anti-scab law.

Much could be said about this bill, but I will come straight to the point. First, the Canada Labour Code needs to be amended in order to harmonize it with the Quebec Labour Code. This would ban once and for all the use of scabs.

Every effort must be made to pass Bill C-263, which aims at banning the retrograde practice, for that is what it is, of using scabs during strikes and lockouts.

For the Bloc Québécois, this is not a new focus of interest. We have been fighting for years about this. We believe that all political parties in the House will be interested in this bill to make labour relations more civilized.

Anti-scab legislation is essential in negotiations where both parties to a dispute, that is to say management and the workers, have to abide by the bargaining power. That is what an anti-scab bill is all about.

Anti-scab legislation also promotes industrial peace. Businesses, big or small, benefit by it. It is, so to speak, the cornerstone of balanced bargaining power. This can never be over-emphasized: there has to be a balance of bargaining power between employers and employees; otherwise, things do not work too well.

Private Members' Business

Moreover, it would put an end, among other things, to the existence of two separate categories of workers in Quebec. On the one hand, there are those under Quebec's jurisdiction who have this right. We will remember that Quebec passed anti-scab legislation at the provincial level in 1977, under the René Lévesque government. On the other hand, there are those who are denied this right because they work in businesses under federal jurisdiction.

The beauty of this bill is that it benefits workers in Quebec as much as their counterparts in Canada. I call upon the honour of all the hon. members of this House to ensure that all workers in Quebec and Canada enjoy uniform protection across all the provinces and territories, where the Canada Labour Code is concerned.

I mentioned earlier that the Bloc Québécois' interest in this kind of legislation is not new. We have lost count of the attempts made in the past 15 years or so to have anti-scab legislation passed.

But time after time, over the years, MPs, unions, associations, lobby groups, that is to say many people, have had their hopes shattered because, in many cases, bills die on the Order Paper. We do not want this to happen again. We hope all the members of the House can agree on that.

Allow me to give a specific example. A petition signed by tens of thousands of citizens was laid before the House by my hon. colleague from Rivière-du-Nord, in support of the workers who are asking the government to pass the anti-scab bill.

Let us take a quick look at the situation in Quebec and in Canada. Right now, only Quebec and British Columbia have legislation prohibiting the use of scabs. In Quebec, anti-scab legislation was adopted in 1977 under the René Lévesque government. Everybody is still agreed today that undeniable progress was made regarding labour relations. It is mentioned in every labour relations study and in labour circles.

What I am now wondering as a member of this House is this: why does Canada not follow Quebec and British Columbia and become the North American leader in labour relations? The Bloc Québécois is offering the parties of this House a wonderful opportunity to regain leadership in labour relations.

For example, in New Brunswick, the union leaders have demanded for some time that anti-scab measures be included in their provincial labour code. The situation is the same in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, where unions are trying to convince their governments to adopt anti-scab legislation.

Let us take a closer look at the Canada Labour Code. Under section 94, specifically subsection (2.1), there is a ban on replacement workers but only if the employer uses these replacement workers, or scabs as they are often called, in order to undermine a trade union's representational capacity.

• (1725)

I believe that this provision is very weak. In such a case, the employer only has to say that he recognizes the trade union that is in place. Thus, an employer only has to ensure that the trade union's representational capacity is not undermined to be entitled to use scabs. This is quite an easy scenario. In other words, if an employer systematically refuses to negotiate while using scabs, it is only then

that the Canada Industrial Relations Board may prohibit the use of scabs.

This is a ridiculously weak measure that opens the door to the use of scabs.

In June 2002, in this House, the then Minister of Labour confirmed this interpretation of the provisions. She even said that the Canada Labour Code does not prohibit the use of replacement workers during a work stoppage.

We see that the issue remains alive. For workers who greatly suffer from this in areas where the Canada Labour Code still applies, we need anti-scab legislation. Why is this important? There has already been a widespread consensus over the years, but more is needed, both for workers under provincial jurisdiction and under federal jurisdiction.

On today's labour market, anti-scab legislation is a necessity, because it would bring more transparency when there is a labour dispute. I do not think any worker or employer is against transparency.

The main benefit of such a bill would be the elimination of violence, which is unfortunately a frequent occurrence, and the bullying on picket lines when disputes drag on and on. I am not making this up. It has been proven over the years.

Disputes drag on because of the lack of a level playing field. That is why disputes sometimes get worse. When we consider the outcome of disputes, and the violence and vandalism in the past, nobody wants that to occur again.

Those are the perverse effects of strikes and lockouts. There are more. With a closer scrutiny, we realize that in a dispute, a strike or lock out, the employer's revenues go down. These disputes are not good for governments either.

The income of workers also go down. So does their purchasing power. And this impact is not limited to a small community or region. The more a dispute lasts, the more its negative impact is visible. The same thing goes for disputes that drag on and generate serious social trouble. We have seen that in Canada in the past.

In Quebec, we also had very long disputes that had a considerable impact long after a settlement. Families affected directly by the dispute have a heavy debt load. There also family problems and psychological disorders because disputes are not settled fast enough.

When we researched this bill, a few figures gave me food for thought. In Quebec, we have an anti-strikebreaking legislation since 1977, thanks to René Lévesque. Going from there, I have a few data that are quite interesting.

Private Members' Business

In Quebec, the average number of working days lost due to labour disputes dropped from 39 days in 1976 to 32 days in 1979, two years after the anti-scab legislation was passed. Later, in 2001, this figure had dropped to 27.4 days. Generally speaking, thanks to the anti-scab legislation, there has been a reduction in the average number of working days lost. From 2002 to 2003, the number of workers involved in labour disputes in Quebec dropped by 18.8%. Those are figures which make us think or should do.

As I was saying, British Columbia passed anti-scab legislation in 1993, with significant results.

• (1730)

As a matter of fact, from 1992 to 1993, the percentage of time lost has dropped by 50%. We can see, therefore, that this type of legislation brings concrete results. One wonders why, after so many years, we are still hesitating to apply the Canada Labour Code to this type of legislation.

I have more significant figures, which speak for themselves in terms of the average number of working days lost from 1992 to 2002. Under the Quebec Labour Code, it is about 15 days, compared to 31 days under the Canada Labour Code. As we can see, there are significant losses in the case of the Canada Labour Code. Under the Quebec Labour Code, the number of days lost for every thousand employees, from 1992 to 2002, is 121 days. During the same period, under the Canada Labour Code, it was 266 days. Therefore, the number of working days lost under the Canada Labour Code is 119% higher than under the Quebec Labour Code.

So we can see we could go on and on citing figures for hours to comprehend that, for instance, the Vidéotron dispute, so much in the news, left deep scars and lasted over 10 months, resulted in over 350,000 days of work being lost in Quebec in 2002. At Sécur, another work dispute caused the loss of 43,000 workdays. These are worrisome numbers.

It is easy to understand in the light of what I have just stated that any parliamentarian who wishes to associate their name, no matter how closely, to a modern, just and fair measure should vote in favour of this project, because it is a legislative measure which can make a world of difference between the law of the jungle and a society which is truly respectful of the rights of working people.

What is needed, first and foremost, is to go beyond mere partisanship. I call upon the goodwill of parliamentarians, because, after all, even though it is put forward by a member of the Bloc, anti-scab legislation is resolutely progressive; and it is also both liberal and democratic at the same time. Indeed, everybody faces that kind of situation. It is thus important to remind people of how urgent it is to act.

Let us take some specific examples, such as Vidéotron. As we know, that conflict lasted over 10 months. Indeed, 2,200 employees of that cable company were on strike or locked out from May 2002 until March 2003. This was a long labour dispute. Things deteriorated. Scabs were used and the company's facilities were vandalized. That whole mess could have been avoided if there had been anti-scab legislation governing the Canada Labour Code. There are many other examples.

In the case of Sécur, after 99% of the employees voted against the employer's offers, they went on strike in July 2002. At the time, Sécur held 75% of the market of valuables transport in Quebec, with an annual turnover of \$55 million.

Sécur employees were delivering cash to thousands of automatic teller machines in Quebec. During the labour dispute, this task was fulfilled by other workers, business managers or replacement workers, as they are called. The result was that, once again, the situation deteriorated and ATMs were vandalized. That conflict lasted over three months.

There is also the case of Radio-Nord Communications, in the Abitibi. Here again, things were not very pretty. Scabs were used, with the result that the conflict lasted a long time. I could go on.

The Bloc Québécois raised this issue many times over the years, often through the voice of the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord, who never gave up.

I will conclude by saying that the battle continues. Today, it is the Bloc Québécois critic on labour issues and member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert who is taking over. Myself, as the member for Louis-Hébert, and the hon. member for Shefford, who is our deputy critic on labour issues, will also continue the battle because, in our opinion, it is important to bring the Canada Labour Code out of its great darkness. It is also important to act before it is too late.

Therefore, considering all the workers whose rights were denied over the years, considering all these victims of a totally obsolete Canada Labour Code, we do not have the right to forget and, more importantly, we no longer have any excuses not to act.

• (1735)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Louis-Hébert, who introduced this important bill in the House of Commons. I would also like to thank the member for Rivière-du-Nord, who introduced a similar bill in the last Parliament. At the time, we had to vote on the anti-scab law.

As the member said very clearly, there is an anti-scab law in Quebec. I think it is commendable. It shortens labour disputes and prevents violence. The government may well give workers the right to strike, that is to stop providing services to the company, to strike and to protest in the street, but if the company has the right to turn around and hire scabs who come to work protected by the police and the government, it becomes pure nonsense. It is time to stop this practice.

Therefore, I would like to congratulate the member for Louis-Hébert for introducing this motion in the House of Commons. I am anxious to see how the Parliament will deal with this matter once and for all.

There has been a 43-month lockout, so I know what happens when strike-breakers can go in and do others' jobs. What are the results? Not just violence on the picket line, but also family breakdown. Sometimes one relative goes in to work while another is picketing. This causes family rifts and it is time that it stopped.

Private Members' Business

In Quebec this has been settled. I think that employers and employees have learned to live with it. I would like to hear what the member for Louis-Hébert has to say on this. He can perhaps talk of how things are in Quebec, where there are no more calls from management to do away with the anti-scab legislation. People have learned to live with it.

It is time Canadians did the same. In some places where there have been strikes, there have also been explosions and losses of life. This is unacceptable in a country such as ours. This is a democracy and we have a right to unionization, to go on strike, but we also have a law that allows strikebreakers to be brought in, which is contrary to the right to strike and unacceptable.

I would like the member for Louis-Hébert to really explain to us what the effect of this was in Quebec and how it led to a labour peace between employees and employers. It would be a good thing for the federal government to bring in a similar law for the whole country. I hope that the Liberals will support this motion, along with the Conservatives. This must be done for once and for all. The NDP will be supporting this motion because what we have before us is a good bill.

• (1740)

Mr. Roger Clavet: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst for his enthusiasm and his passion. It seems we are dealing with a convert, someone who has no need of further arguments. He has spoken from the heart and I thank him.

There are other people, not just those associated with the NDP, who have given ample proof of their sincere commitment to the working men and women. I will not go on. All members are aware that in the name of the CAW, Buzz Hargrove and others have said something about the anti-strikebreaking law in Quebec. That is an authoritative source.

Perhaps that answers the question raised by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, as to what the law changed in Quebec and what it was meant to do.

In August 2002, Buzz Hargrove said:

The Harris government's abolition of Ontario's anti-scab legislation proves that labour relations are in better shape when the right to bargain in good faith is protected.

He also referred to the Quebec approach.

In December 2003, Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, another voice of experience, explained that Quebec's anti-scab legislation and that of British Columbia had created:

—more harmonious labour relations and have significantly reduced the number of work days lost to strikes and lockouts.

There are many sources. Many people are able to say today, years after the Quebec anti-strikebreaking law was passed, that many people benefit from it, both the workers and the employers. We can see it: the figures were mentioned already. Everyone is happy with it, whether on the union or employer side. The fair balance of strength between bosses and workers has been restored. It is a healthy and equitable force in bargaining. Each side respects the other more.

That, in brief, is the purpose of this bill and I thank the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst for his support.

[*English*]

Hon. Judi Longfield (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Housing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in the discussion on the debate on Bill C-263, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers). Even though I do not agree with the content or the intent, it is nevertheless an interesting topic worthy of considered debate.

We should discuss the issue of replacement workers in the context of the economic times we find ourselves in. To say we are living with challenges to industry and labour would be an understatement. The past decade has been one where the forces of globalization, trade and instant communication have changed the labour landscape forever. These forces, along with the corporate and economic restructuring, have placed great pressure on employers and employees and also on the existing collective bargaining environment.

Our economy is ultimately and intimately connected to our ability to manufacture goods and provide services to the world at competitive prices. Mad cow disease, SARS and disputed tariffs on our softwood lumber are just three examples of how industry can be undermined overnight. We are at the mercy of many things that we cannot control, including the price of imported oil and gas, the fluctuating value of foreign currencies in relation to the Canadian dollar, and unfair trade practices. All of these put our industries, including federal jurisdiction industries, at risk in the blink of an eye.

The workers that fall within the purview of the federal labour legislation are not immune to these changes. As the whole notion of work and the expectation of workplace partners change and evolve, the process of collective bargaining is just that much more complex.

Having legislation on the books that bans the use of replacement workers during an industrial dispute remains very contentious, so much so that 8 out of 10 provincial jurisdictions have chosen not to take this route. It is clear that it is a very polarizing issue for the stakeholders. Employee representatives and unions typically support a complete ban on the use of replacement workers. On the other hand, employers invariably argue in favour of their use. That was the position they held during the Sims consultation almost a decade ago.

I can appreciate that both sides have legitimate reasons for holding the positions they do. The extensive industrial relations expertise brought to bear during the Sims task force did not result in a unanimous recommendation on the use of replacement workers. However, when that report was released in early 1996, I believe it provided the best possible compromise, one that strikes the best balance between the competing expectations of the stakeholders.

Let us be clear on what those recommendations were all about. Sims said there should be no general prohibition of replacement workers but that there should be legislative recourse in the case of an unfair labour practice. That is why the task force recommended that the use of replacement workers in a dispute for the demonstrated purpose of undermining the union's representational capacity should be prohibited.

Private Members' Business

It also went on to say that in the event of such a finding, the Canada Industrial Relations Board should be given specific remedial powers to order the discontinuance of the use of replacement workers. Parliamentarians who were around at the time of the debate on Bill C-19 were also at odds over this provision, but in the end the consensus of most was that they should vote for balance. That is exactly what they did.

It seems to me that for our part as legislators it is not for us to take sides, but rather to come up with a rule of law where the needs of one side are not met at the expense of the other. That is why the legislative changes made in 1999 so closely mirror the task force recommendations. I would have great concern if we were to now arbitrarily, in isolation of other considerations, ban the use of replacement workers along the lines suggested in Bill C-263.

Banning replacement workers would reopen that old argument and dissension, and for no apparent purpose. It would jeopardize the compromise that was reached with such efforts and considered debate almost a decade ago. The long battle for a reasonable settlement on this sensitive issue would be reignited. New battle lines would be drawn. The debate would start all over again.

• (1745)

If it is indeed the case that the labour and management stakeholders in the industrial relations group will never find unanimity on this matter, then perhaps the very lack of agreement speaks to the need for us to continue to go on with a reasonable compromise. For us now to prohibit the use of replacement workers entirely would set back the course we set out with the changes in part I, implemented in the 1990s, which sought balance and compromise.

That is why the government is disinclined to make changes to the legislation that is working relatively well. Even though the hon. member's bill changes just a few provisions of the legislation, its potential impact could be substantial in upsetting the balance of expectation on the part of stakeholders.

I remain firmly of the belief that our current legislation is worded exactly the way it should be. The considerations of all parties at play are kept in balance. Both sides are evenly served. If the legislation is not broken, I do not think we need to fix it. Let us not go down that road again.

For these reasons, I cannot lend my support to Bill C-263.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this evening to Bill C-263, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code with respect to replacement workers during a strike action.

Before addressing this bill in particular, I believe it is important that we take the bill in the context of what has happened in this Parliament in times past.

In the 37th Parliament, a similar bill, Bill C-328, was debated and subsequently defeated. The reasons for that bill not passing then are relevant to our present discussions on Bill C-263 today, and that has to do with the amendment to the Canada Labour Code, part 1, in 1999.

Previous to that, HRDC undertook an extensive review that resulted in an amendment to the Canada Labour Code relating in part

to our discussion today on the issue of replacement workers. The amendment to the Labour Code was precipitated by a task force report, chaired by Andrew Sims, entitled "Seeking a Balance". I think the title speaks to what was attempted to be accomplished.

In that report, after extensive consultation with major stakeholders representing employers' interests, employees' interests, society's interests and the country as a whole, the majority recommended a provision in the Labour Code that would give employers flexibility to meet their operating responsibilities, but would prevent them from using replacement workers to undermine a union's legitimate bargaining objectives.

That is the balance that has worked since 1999. We have not had any instance where there has been a problem. There has been only one case that was to be referred to the quasi-judicial body and it was resolved before it got there. If it has been working, we need to allow it to continue working and not try to fix it. The minority report recommended a prohibition of replacement workers in its entirety, which is similar to the provision this bill is proposing.

A complete prohibition of replacement workers would force the parties to bargain in a closed environment, one which would not account for the economic realities of the marketplace, especially as we face them today. There are economic considerations both for the employer's benefit and the employee's benefit that require not only the preservation of the property, but the preservation of the business and the economic realities that it faces.

We find that we are, in the federal case, much different from what they would be in a provincial case because this jurisdiction covers essential services across the country and it affects not only one province but it affects Canadians across the whole country.

The relevant portion of the current section of the labour code, section 94(2.1), which Bill C-263 is attempting to change, is a result of the majority report and provides that no employer or person acting on behalf of an employer shall use replacement workers for the demonstrated purpose of undermining a trade union's representational capacity.

This amendment to the Labour Code was an attempt to deal fairly with the issue of replacement workers in the federal jurisdiction by accommodating the competing values and interests of employers, unions and employees. It attempts to strike a balance by prohibiting the use of replacement workers if the intent is to undermine a union's representational capacity.

It is not fair or accurate to say that it allows replacement workers in total. It allows them to the extent necessary and as long as it is not abused. So far employers have not been abusing that provision. It has been working. We know when there is a strike on. We know by the services, whether it is Bell Canada or the railways, that the service is being disrupted and the legitimate purposes of strike continues as the parties attempt to work things out. That must be preserved.

Private Members' Business

What is being proposed is significantly different from the solution that was reached by the stakeholders in the current Labour Code. The bill seeks to undo the substantial contribution of literally scores of stakeholders over a period of years and the subsequent full debate in the House of two bills, Bill C-66 and Bill C-19, which led to the amendments resulting in our current Labour Code.

I empathize with the intent of the bill, that any time the duties of anyone on strike are performed by someone else, the effectiveness of a strike is diluted and the bargaining position of the striking employees is weakened. Strike action is a valuable tool for employees who wish to bring resolution in the collective bargaining process, and the employees ought not to face punitive measures for taking action to which they are legally entitled. This attempts to balance that right and allows the provision for an unfair labour practice to be taken to a higher level.

● (1750)

The Conservative Party of Canada supports the right of workers to organize democratically, to bargain collectively and to strike peacefully. The Conservative Party is also committed to working with both unions and employers in areas of federal jurisdiction to continue developing dispute settlement mechanisms to minimize or avoid work disruptions to the benefit of both employers and employees.

In conclusion I would like to refer once more to the title of the Sims report, "Seeking a Balance". After all was said and heard in previous Parliaments by countless witnesses on both sides of the issue, I believe they sought that balance and attained it. The balance exists and is now incorporated in the current part I of the Labour Code.

Many interests have been taken into account beyond just the interests of the employers and the employees. The report capsulized that our approach has been to seek balance between labour and management, between social and economic values, between variable instruments of labour policy, between rights and responsibilities, between individuals and democratic group rights and between the public interest and free collective bargaining.

We seek a stable structure within which free collective bargaining will work. We want legislation that is sound, enactable and lasting. We see the too frequent swinging of the political pendulum as being counterproductive to sound labour relations. We looked for reforms that would allow labour and management to adjust and thrive in the increasingly global workplace. That is the essence of it.

If Parliament wishes to re-examine this issue of replacement workers as part of a larger study, I believe considerable interest would be generated among the stakeholders to provide for a full and complete debate on this matter. That type of comprehensive debate and discussion cannot take place in the limited time we have in the House in the context of a private member's bill.

Without significant contributions from all of the affected stakeholders, I recommend that members of this House not support this bill in its present form. I agree with the previous comments, if it is fixed leave it that way.

● (1755)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in the debate today. I will begin by complimenting my Bloc Québécois colleague from Louis-Hébert on introducing Bill C-263.

As my colleague and whip from Acadie—Bathurst has said, our caucus is four-square behind this. It was not a good sign to hear from the Liberals, but I want to say to the hon. member that the NDP will be there this time, next time and every time it takes until this becomes the law of the land.

I was very fortunate to have served for a number of years in the Ontario legislature. One of my proudest moments as an MPP was to stand in my place and cast my very precious vote in favour of bill 40, which then made scabs illegal in the Province of Ontario, just as they are illegal in Quebec and B.C. Unfortunately, as a result of the 1995 election, Premier Mike Harris was elected and the law was eliminated.

I can tell the House that it is the intent of the Ontario NDP to continue that struggle to ensure that the day returns when scabs are not to be found anywhere in the Province of Ontario. However, today's debate is about Canada.

Federally, this caucus has a proud history and tradition of supporting many progressive pieces of labour legislation and, in particular, this bill when it was introduced by the member's colleague a couple of years ago.

In fact, our leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, joined with the Bloc Québécois in welcoming the Videotron workers to Parliament Hill. He was there to represent our caucus and ensure that the strong feelings we have about workers' rights federally as well as provincially were understood.

I will not repeat all the good reasons why the legislation should pass because there is not enough time, but I do want tackle head on the issue that we heard from the Liberals and the Conservatives. I have to say that I would have been pleasantly shocked had the Conservatives taken any other position. I am very disappointed in the Liberals. Their main argument, as I heard it, was that if it is not broken, do not fix it. That is not sufficient. It is not even accurate.

First, it was pointed out by the sponsor of the bill that right now, in two jurisdictions in Canada, Quebec and B.C., two workers could be doing very similar work but one has the protection that when he or she goes on strike it will be a fair fight and scabs will not be allowed in, while the other worker does not have that right and faces the possibility of taking on an employer that has much deeper pockets than ordinary working people and their families and, therefore, that worker does not have a fair fight. That is what this is about. It is not trying to tip the balance one way or another. It is trying to ensure that there is a balance and that it is a real balance.

Private Members' Business

Let me say to the hon. members that when they think about this they should think about it on the individual level on that picket line. We are talking now about situations, which have existed in this country, unfortunately, far too often, where workers are on a legal strike but they do not have the protection of a law like this. After workers have been out for days and weeks and months it does not take long before every morning they see those buses going in, with the scabs inside, and the windows covered over with newspaper, or even painted, going in and taking their job, their ability to earn a living, pay the bills and put food on the table and provide for their children. Somebody is crossing that line every day. Even the most law-abiding citizens in the world can only take that for so long.

I have been on strikes. The Christmas season is coming and, regardless of one's religion, it is usually a time for exchanging gifts and it is certainly about children. I will tell members that it is really hard to look into the eyes of workers who have been on a picket line for so long that they do not know how they will provide Christmas presents for their kids. So, when that bus comes on that cold morning, it does not take much for somebody to snap. That is when we get violence.

I want to repeat something that is important, vis-à-vis what happened in Ontario. When Mike Harris looked at repealing the NDP law that banned scabs, the police associations, the union of the police, the ones out in uniform, urged Harris not to change the law. That might surprise some people if they were to think about the politics of it and some stereotypical analysis.

● (1800)

Think about it this way. Police officers are just working people too. They go to work every day. They do work for us. They want to go home at the end of the day and be with their families, just like the steelworkers at Stelco and Dofasco in my riding of Hamilton Centre. They know that when scabs are involved in a strike there is the potential for violence. The one thing that a police chief dislikes to do almost above anything else is to put officers in harm's way. We are allowing a situation to be created that history shows causes violence to very innocent people.

All we are trying to do with this law is to ensure that it is a fair fight. No one can tell me that it is a fair fight when a corporation or company can bring in replacement workers. The argument usually is that the workers can withhold their labour, so the company should have a right to bring someone else in to work and then it becomes a fair fight. There is no fair fight there. The corporation does not have to go home and face kids who want and need new shoes. The worker does.

If we want to make this a fair fight, then let us ensure that the corporation, the company or the government for that matter, has no more ability to generate revenue than those workers. Now we are a little closer to a fair fight. Now police do not have to move frightened, scared and angry strikers out of the way so that scabs can be brought in to do their jobs and keep them out on the picket lines even longer. We eliminate all of that and put the emphasis on negotiations and settlements.

I do not for a second believe that every single person inside that bus is what I would consider, based on my value system, to be a bad or evil person. Some of them are. They do not care about anybody

else, they will take the job and too bad for everyone else. A lot of the scabs are new Canadians who do not know all of the cultures.

An hon. member: Did he say that?

Mr. David Christopherson: I hear the member asking if I said that.

This is called exploitation. That is what this is about. There are people inside that bus who are just as frightened about their future and their ability to provide for their kids. All of these things are created by allowing this situation to continue.

All we are asking is that working people be given a fair opportunity to achieve a collective agreement that gives them the money, benefits and pensions that are commensurate with the work they are performing. When there is a dispute, let us find the most peaceful means of resolution. That is what the hon. member's bill does here today. It offers a peaceful means to a potentially violent situation. That is why we feel so strongly about this.

It is interesting that in B.C. and Ontario, it was the NDP governments that brought in this legislation. With due deference to the PQ, although we certainly have a very different view of Canada on the broader vision of what society should look like, who gets what and what the values are of that society, I think we share a lot of those beliefs.

Therefore, it is not surprising at all that the strongest voices here today are the Bloc and the NDP standing up for fairness for workers. It is shameful that both the Conservatives and, it would seem, the Liberals are planning to vote against what is a peaceful, progressive piece of legislation that would improve things in this country.

● (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak about the anti-scab legislation, but at the same time, I think it is a shame that we are still talking about this issue today. In my opinion, there should have been federal anti-scab legislation a long time ago.

The speech we just heard from the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie really struck a chord with me, especially when he was talking about the human side of this issue. That is what I will try to address in the next few minutes. I also had the experience of going through a labour dispute from October 20, 1982 until January 6, 1986—38 months—and I survived.

If I had the time, I would describe what I experienced in detail, but first I will talk about the issue in general. Nonetheless, the human side that the hon. member talked about is very important. That is where we find the essence of what anti-scab legislation could be.

I am also aware of the fact that the hon. member for Louis-Hébert presented this bill.

I went through a 38-month labour dispute, but I was not alone. We were 12 at the time. We were 12 at the beginning of the strike, but 38 months later we were eight. In light of various commitments and financial difficulties, among other things, four of the strikers had to go to another company or elsewhere.

Private Members' Business

Let me give you a little context of the time from 1982 to 1986. Of the 12 strikers, there are two who still work at the same place. It is called Radio CHNC ltée. It is in New Carlisle in the riding of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. That is where I worked for over 20 years.

At first, I was simply a man who went on strike on October 20, 1982 knowing full well that the dispute would mean that there were difficult times ahead, especially considering that there was no federal anti-scab legislation and that radio stations are under federal jurisdiction. In a way, we knew what to expect. However, what is at issue here—and we had the opportunity to hear speeches about this—is the game. It is not, however, the kind of game that entertains or is fun. The length of labour disputes depends on a the balance of bargaining of power. When there is no anti-scab legislation, as is the case in Canada's history, disputes last for an extremely long time.

I had to go through a 38-month strike. Others have been locked out. Others in the same sector, especially in Quebec—I am thinking of the people from Télé-Métropole—were locked out for about two years. I also remember people I knew from the CKML radio station in Mont-Laurier who had to go through similar labour disputes.

When people negotiate, they simply assume that the balance of power will bring about better working conditions. Indeed, unionized workers looking to renew a contract simply strive to improve their working conditions. Nobody wants to go out on picket lines or stay home for months. I went on strike on October 20, 1982 thinking it would only last a few weeks. It lasted 38 months.

On a personal level, I learned a lot from that experience. I learned that one should make the best of one's bad fortune. Actually, what I went through is quite similar to what the hon. member said.

• (1810)

Let me share some memories. It will soon be Christmas. I remember I had to go through four holiday seasons before getting a final result, on January 6, 1986. I don't think this is the kind of situation that the employer as well as the strikers would like to go through again, nor would we wish others to live the same situation. Even just a few weeks of labour dispute can be extremely trying. Imagine then what almost four years of strike can do.

Some people go through severe depressions. We were 12 employees at the radio station and as many were replacing us. As a matter of fact, we were picketing every day and we could clearly see those people passing by because they did not come in buses or vehicles with tinted windows. Those people were members of the management staff or scabs. We could also see them elsewhere because some of them lived in our community. This can create uneasy situations and even very serious problems within families or communities.

When I started striking on October 20, 1982, I could not have guessed that the labour dispute would be so long. I had an opportunity to observe the solidarity that can exist between workers, in particular in the labour sector. People from all areas of Quebec came, at one time or another, to encourage us on the picket lines. At the same time, we went through moments of discouragement because at times we felt like we were hitting a wall. We wondered if we would ever overcome that situation.

To add to the horror that we were living day after day, asking ourselves how we would solve the issue, the power relationship, the balance we were referring to earlier, was distorted. This situation allowed the employer to prolong the dispute. At the end of the day, everyone lost. After 38 months, when we came back to work on January 6, 1986, I felt like I had won nothing more than respect and I got my job back.

Such a long dispute can lead to absurd situations, and we went through a very bad one. At some point, about two years after the dispute began, the scabs who replaced us, who were there because there was no anti-scab legislation, wanted to unionize. That means that the board had to examine this.

During the weeks or the months that the dispute went on, despite a public hearing and the legal quibbling that may have taken place at the time, let me tell you that the situation was extremely difficult for us. The labour dispute has already been going on for too long and your realize that those who are working in your place, the scabs, are asking to unionize and it is indeed a possibility.

Finally, we won and there was no agreement on the unionization of scabs. However, this shows how far the imbalance can go in this area.

Last, I will take a few seconds to pay tribute to the people who went on strike with me at that time. We were 12; so the 11 other people were: Mario Roussi, Denis Lévesque, Raoul Gagné, Gérard-Raymond Blais, Diane R. Poirier, Diane Poirier, Gabriel Lebrasseur, Angéline Joseph, Jacques Parent, Claude Roy and Claude Girard.

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-263, introduced by my colleague, concerning the use of replacement workers during strikes and lockouts. There is a very important point of principle that we should keep our eye on as a House and as members.

When we go back to the Sims report of 1995, there was never total unanimity on the report's recommendations with respect to replacement workers. Certainly, the matter of replacement workers was a highly contentious issue in 1995, when that multi-stakeholder task force was struck precisely to advise the government on how it should proceed and how it should move forward.

This existing situation is a reasonable compromise that gets us to the heart of the matter. The current provision concerning replacement workers is a compromise like so much Canadian legislation.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

During the proceedings of the Sims task force in 1995 the unions were asking for a complete prohibition of replacement workers during legal work stoppages, but the employers refused all limitation of that order. The task force came to the conclusion that a reasonable solution could be found halfway between these two extremes.

That solution was to allow the use of replacement workers provided the union can lodge a complaint with the Canada Industrial Relations Board if it deemed replacement workers were being used to weaken its capacity to fairly represent its members.

[English]

This is the important point of principle that we should recognize. Some will argue that the employer's countervailing power to the union's right to strike is the lockout. That is not so. The countervailing power to the union's right to withdraw its labour is the employer's right to continue to try operate its business during a strike.

The 1999 compromise was intended to balance the competing interests of the parties. The task force said that employers should be able to try to keep their businesses operating as long as they were not using replacement workers for the purpose of trying to undermine the union.

Here is a quote from the task force. It states:

Replacement workers can be necessary to sustain the economic viability of an enterprise in the face of a harsh economic climate and unacceptable union demands. It is important in a system of free collective bargaining that employers maintain that option unrestrained by any blanket prohibition....It is only in exceptional circumstances that replacement workers are used for an inappropriate end.

That was the view of the multi-stakeholder deliberative process that led to the compromise situation we now see in the legislation.

● (1820)

[Translation]

I think this is a pretty fair compromise in terms of the values and interests of both the employers and the unions and workers.

[English]

The fact is most major federally regulated employers do not hire replacement workers. It is my understanding there have been only about 15 cases taken to CIRB and of the three decisions issued to date none of the circumstances have been found to be in violation of the law.

The changes to the code have been in play for about five years now. The current provisions of part I are as a result of compromise. They representing a balancing of the interests of labour and management.

The current provisions in Canada Labour Code work well. We should never break up a winning combination. As a result, I do not believe these provisions should be changed at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

TERRORISM

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am following up a question that I originally asked on October 26. It related to a comment made by the member for Don Valley East. I want to quote from the *Ottawa Citizen* concerning a comment she made, which I have taken exception to. It says:

—(the U. S. administration) have bombed a city, Baghdad, that used to be the centre of civilization in the Muslim world. And you have bombed it in to smithereens. I mean give me a break. And you expect people to respect you. I don't think so.

She goes on to say:

Who wrought this terrorism?...Where did they come from? They are the result of the policies of the United States. They have been interfering in the world.

These types of comments are not at all useful in our relationship with the Americans. I recently received a letter from one of my constituents, and I want to read some excerpts from it because the writer makes some great comments.

He says: "Canadians would be complacent if we rested on our laurels and concluded that we have gone far enough in ensuring equal rights and mutual respect in our society and in the international community. Today, we live in a country where talking openly and freely against Americans is accepted and also encouraged. When Canadians honestly ask themselves what really drives their anti-American feelings, the simple answer is, anti-Americanism is a form of discrimination, racism and bigotry that has survived in the Canadian culture under the radar. Canadians cannot pride themselves on being an open and tolerant society as long as it is acceptable to slander the American people as openly and as freely as it is happening in Canada today on every street corner. Bigotry, discrimination and racism are some of the most difficult diseases that exist in a society. There are too many Canadians that hate Americans in Canada".

He goes on to ask me to help my constituency, the province of Manitoba, and the people of Canada to identify anti-Americanism as a form of racism and bigotry and to make my mark in the development of creating an open and tolerant society in Canada that Canadians have striven for since Confederation.

I want to put out some definitions so that we truly understand what is happening in this land.

Intolerant is an unwillingness to recognize and respect differences in opinions or beliefs.

A creed is any system of principles or beliefs. A bigot is one who holds blindly and intolerantly to a particular creed.

Discrimination is a credence or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit, partiality or prejudice, racial discrimination and discrimination against foreigners.

Adjournment Proceedings

Prejudice is an irrational suspicion of hatred of a particular group, this being the Americans, race, or religion.

The member or Don Valley East had no qualms in making her comments.

The Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development recently in a *Globe and Mail* interview spoke of being at an event in Rochester, New York, where everyone put their hands over their hearts when singing a patriotic song. He said that he found the intensity of the patriotism among the Republican true believers unsettling.

The member for Scarborough—Guildwood was recently quoted as saying “I just think they’re loony-tunes out of control down south, so don’t bother. We can gain no lessons from the directions the American government is taking”.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage recently said “we are surrounded, you know, with a certain menace starting from the States, let’s face it”.

I believe all those quotes fit into the definitions of intolerance, bigotry, prejudice and discrimination, being propagated by our own Liberal government. We have had the Liberals refer to Americans as morons, bastards and idiots and the Liberal MP—

• (1825)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we have vigorous agreement here between our two parties because the government and the member’s party both agree that relationships with the United States are very important.

In the fight against terrorism there are no closer neighbours and no stronger partners than Canada and the United States. Both countries cooperate extensively, bilaterally and on the international scene to counter terrorism.

Canada and the United States have sprung from different histories, different political traditions. Our interests frequently overlap and run parallel, but our perceptions of the world do not always coincide. Canadians expect that when we differ from the United States we do so respectfully and after careful consideration. We will continue an almost permanent dialogue with the United States on all these issues.

As we have seen, these issues sometimes bring forth strong emotions on both sides of the border. We regret intemperate remarks from any source, whether by members of this House or in the media in the U.S. or Canada, but we must all acknowledge that everyone enjoys the right of freedom of speech.

However, the facts, and I repeat, the facts show a mature relationship, a strong partnership that recognizes our differences, but which is overwhelmingly based on mutual interest.

For more than 60 years we have been steadfast allies in the defence and security of North America. From the creation in 1940 of the permanent joint board on defence, to the establishment in 1958 of Norad, to the launch in 1988 of the bilateral consultative group on counterterrorism, to the December 2001 smart border declaration and

action plan, to the subsequent creation of the binational planning group, and in myriad other ways, Canada and the United States have adapted their security collaboration effectively at the operational and political level to respond to new threats and challenges.

As members can see, our close bilateral cooperation predates September 11, 2001, and has been further expanded and strengthened as a result, in order to more effectively protect our countries and our people.

In Canada, the government is investing more than \$8 billion on enhanced security, including cooperation with the United States. We have created new structures, such as the consolidated Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, and elaborated our first ever national security policy, which recognize the critical importance of our security and counterterrorism cooperation with the United States and reinforces them.

Canada participated with the U.S. a few months ago in a top official exercise that simulated simultaneous mass casualty terrorist attacks on the U.S. and that further strengthened our common readiness to face the challenges of crisis response and consequence management in such a situation.

These efforts and others are being effective and are recognized and appreciated by our U.S. partners. That is the view of this government and the conclusion of the Government of the United States. The most recent U.S. state department report, “Patterns of Global Terrorism”, states unequivocally, “...overall anti-terrorism cooperation with Canada remains excellent and serves as a model for bilateral cooperation”.

Canada and U.S. officials also work closely together in international organizations. Our efforts are directed toward reinforcing, implementing and developing new internationally agreed standards and measures to counter terrorism, while ensuring that these respect our fundamental values on the respect of human rights, diversity and tolerance.

As we know, much remains to be done, but much has been accomplished. Canada-U.S. security cooperation has never been better, at both the operational level on the ground and at the political level. The U.S. secretary of homeland security, Tom Ridge, made it abundantly clear how much the United States appreciated Canada’s solidarity and active cooperation during his visit to Ottawa.

• (1830)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member definitely missed the point of the question, which is that the comments that are coming from the Liberal benches are hurting our relationship with the U.S. and that those comments are discriminating and intolerant on their behalf. They have to bring it to check.

The member for Mississauga—Erindale was not thrown out of caucus because of her extenuating comments on the Americans. She was thrown out because she attacked the Prime Minister.

I think the member has forgotten the definitions of intolerance, creed, bigotry, discrimination and prejudice. Again I ask why the government continues to tolerate these damaging anti-American outbursts and why the Liberals blame the victim when it comes to terrorism?

Adjournment Proceedings

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, let us stay with the facts. The government has added significant resources to Canada's effort in the United States. We have opened new missions in Denver, Houston, Raleigh, Philadelphia, San Diego, Phoenix and Anchorage.

In Washington, where we are served by one of the finest embassies operated by any nation, we are adding a new section called the Washington secretariat. The Prime Minister has given it two missions. The first is to support the members of Parliament. Members will recall that some of our committees have visited Washington in recent months to meet with members of Congress.

The second mission of the secretariat would be to support the provinces and territories in advancing their agendas in the United States, as promised by the Prime Minister to the first ministers. I am happy to note that Alberta will be joining Team Canada in Washington and that other provinces are considering joining as well. Through the secretariat, the Prime Minister has strengthened the Canadian team in Washington, which is clear evidence that the government places the highest priority on managing relations with the United States.

JUSTICE

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reason I am addressing this issue during adjournment proceedings tonight is because of the seriousness of the question. That is not to say that some questions are not serious, but the question I put to the Minister of Justice some time ago dealt with the issue of child pornography. This is an issue that we as Canadians must deal with to protect our young and society. In particular, my original question dealt with loopholes for child pornographers in his legislation. I know the government has worked on this legislation, but my underlying goal is to close all possible loopholes for child pornographers.

Let us be clear. I do not think there is one member in the House, at least I hope not, that would want a single child pornographer anywhere in this country to get away with the destructive habits that have been promoted through that criminal behaviour. Not only is the initial crime of taking pictures, et cetera, harmful, but we have a wide body of literature in the social sciences indicating that child pornographers can feed on this and go on to more heinous crimes. Mr. Ted Bundy, a serial murderer in the United States, is a perfect example.

It is with that intent and underlying concept that I addressed the original question to the Minister of Justice. When I asked him about using the charter of rights to protect child pornographers, he rightly said that the legislation must be constitutional. I have a concern with that. The minister undoubtedly has some very talented lawyers in his department, but we have not looked at the closing of every last loophole to close off the artistic merit defence. That is a defence that has been used in the courts. That is a defence that has absolutely no reasonableness to it. I cannot for the life of me think how anyone could possibly consider child pornography even the least bit to be artistic. That was the basis for my question.

I am wondering how the government can consider, even in the slightest way, that anything about child pornography, in any way, shape or form could be considered artistic. I would urge the minister

to consider legislation stating that child pornography would not be protected by artistic merit.

I understand the need for legitimate purposes, and to spell out very specifically and very clearly in the most narrow terms what they are. Absolutely, these offences should be most narrow for police and training purposes, and that I understand.

I will reiterate my question to the Minister of Justice. Will he ensure that the artistic merit defence will no longer be possible through all legal means through his bill? Will he do everything he possibly can to narrow the defences of child pornography so that child pornographers will not get off? Can he assure me, on the artistic merit defence, that it can no longer be used?

• (1835)

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his statement on a matter of compelling concern. We do share the concerns with respect to child pornography and closing any loopholes in that regard.

The test of a just society is how it treats the most vulnerable amongst us, and the most vulnerable of the vulnerable are our children. Therefore, we introduced Bill C-2, the protection of children and other vulnerable persons act, on October 8, 2004, as the very first legislative initiative of this session and of our government.

Bill C-2 proposes a broad package of six criminal law reforms that would significantly improve the criminal justice system's ability to protect our children and other vulnerable persons. I am referring here to those provisions that deal with the protection of victims from domestic violence, voyeurism, and sexual exploitation of the vulnerable class between 14 and 18 years of age. Central to this package of reforms, as the hon. member has rightly identified, are those reforms that relate to child pornography.

Our existing laws, with regard to child pornography, are already comprehensive in the manner in which they enact prohibitions on the possession, printing, sale, access, exportation et cetera of child pornography.

Importantly, these prohibitions apply to depictions involving real children under the age of 18 as well as those involving imaginary children such as a computer generated depiction or composite of a child. This is because both are to be condemned. The former because it involves the sexual abuse of a real child, and the latter because it portrays children as a class of objects for sexual exploitation, and thereby poses a real harm to children and society.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is against this background that our bill proposed a number of reforms to broaden the definition of child pornography: to include audio formats as well as written material that has as its dominant characteristic the description of unlawful sexual activity with children where that description is provided for a sexual purpose; prohibiting the advertising of child pornography; increasing the maximum penalty for all child pornography offences on summary conviction from 6 to 18 months; making the commission of any child pornography offence with intent to profit an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes; of particular importance to the member's remarks and within the context of the whole bill, replacing the existing defences of artistic merit, education, scientific or medical purpose and public good with a two-pronged, harm-based legitimate purpose defence that would only be available for an act that has a legitimate purpose related to the administration of justice, science, medicine, education or art, and even with that legitimate purpose would not pose an undue risk of harm to children. The harm-based test is often ignored when questions and comments are put to it.

Simply put, the proposed child pornography defence, even with artistic merit in the context I mentioned, provides a narrower and clearer test and incorporates the harm-based standard used by the Supreme Court of Canada in upholding the existing child pornography provisions in 2001.

There are no loopholes in the bill. It proposes reforms that clearly underscore the serious nature of all child pornography offences by broadening our existing definition of child pornography to encompass new formats; by creating a new prohibition against new forms of criminal conduct; increasing the maximum sentences for these offences; and significantly narrowing the availability of a defence to ensure that—

• (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

Mr. Bradley Trost: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate at least what the government has been attempting to do, and something is better than nothing.

I heard the government saying again that there is still some defence of education or art if it is an undue risk. I am not a lawyer, but I have talked to lawyers in our caucus, one of whom was a former attorney general in the province of Manitoba. I have been told that if defence lawyers get a bit of room, they will go right through it. We should give them no room whatsoever.

All child pornography has undue risk to it. There should be absolutely no excuse for education or art. That is the point we are trying to get across. Why does the government not get it? There is nothing educational about child pornography. There is nothing artistic about child pornography. The definitions should be narrowed to such an extent that those useless categories should be eliminated.

Will the government see the light on this issue?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, we seek to protect the rights of children and to protect the rights and freedoms enshrined in the charter. It is not a question of doing one or the other. It is a question of protecting all children against the risk of harm through child pornography and in a manner that will withstand charter scrutiny.

This is particularly relevant for the hon. member. What he refers to as a loophole, we regard as being principled leadership. If we do anything less than this in a manner of prohibiting pornography, we fail our children. If the child pornography laws do not comport with the charter, are struck down, and we have no child pornography laws, we also fail our children.

I call on all hon. members to support Bill C-2 and thereby lend the support both to the protection of our children and to the protection of our charter, which will allow for those child pornography laws to be sustained and protect our children.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a very sad situation in the sense that we have a number of RCMP widows who have faced a very difficult situation.

The circumstances are as follows. When their husbands have died in the line of duty, these women have been approached by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and officials with the RCMP have told them that they must have full regimental funerals for their husbands. They are not told, however, that they will have to pay the costs of those funerals.

Some of these RCMP widows, who have already sacrificed loved ones, are then assessed bills, one of them for over \$20,000. It was asked for out of the widow's own pocket after the death of her husband. She was never told that she would be accountable for that bill. She was told that it had to be a full regimental funeral. She is not just one widow. There are three cases. There is also a fourth that I will talk about a little bit.

Today I want to ask the government, at what stage is it at in terms of changing its policy? The answer we received from the Deputy Prime Minister was that it was a policy of the RCMP. The RCMP, of course, is a tool and a branch of the federal government. I would like to have a little more specificity from it this evening.

There is a recent press release that was put out by Kathy Maurice, Margaret Galloway and Lesley Massey. They are the three widows in question. The press release states:

In our opinion the reimbursement amount as set out in this policy does not even begin to accurately reflect the actual costs associated with these funerals.

It is unfair that the Mounties insisted on a full regimental ceremony without even mentioning that these women would have to pay. When can we expect the review of the three family cases to be completed? We know it took six years to properly compensate the victims of hepatitis C, and we wonder how long it will take the government to compensate these widows.

There is a fourth situation that has just recently arisen. It is incredibly important that the government be timely about these things because Constable Glen Evely of the RCMP in Vernon, B.C., was killed in the line of duty just last Saturday. I asked questions on this matter of the Deputy Prime Minister last week. He was given a full regimental funeral, as every officer who dies in the line of duty deserves, but at what price?

Adjournment Proceedings

Will Constable Evely's widow be stuck with these same costs, these huge bills, that these three other widows have been stuck with? We do not want to see the type of heartless attitude that was shown to Kathy Maurice, Margaret Galloway or Lesley Massey reflected onto this new situation.

RCMP Commissioner Guiliano Zaccardelli flew to all of these funerals, every single one. We would like to know, how much money did it cost him to fly to these funerals? Certainly, if the RCMP and the government, therefore, can see fit to pay to fly the commissioner, why not look after the bills—

• (1845)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government, the RCMP and indeed all Canadian law enforcement officials recognize the sacrifices made by police officers who put their lives on the line every day.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize RCMP Auxiliary Constable Glen Evely, from Vernon, British Columbia, who recently died on duty. It is always extremely tragic when any police officer dies while contributing to public safety.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

The RCMP has great respect and compassion for its members who died while carrying out their duties and for their families.

You are of course aware that the RCMP has undertaken a review of the funeral costs of the three members who died while on duty, namely Superintendent Dennis Massey, Corporal Jim Galloway, and officer Ghislain Maurice.

I can assure you that in the course of its review, the RCMP is in constant communication with the three families.

[*English*]

The RCMP's review will also identify if other families of fallen members have incurred costs associated with regimental funerals.

The RCMP has consistently adhered to its policies for funeral benefits over the years. Relevant policy and protocol are now being examined and the RCMP is committed to modernizing parts of the policy regarding funeral and burial benefits and to taking any corrective action deemed necessary based on these findings.

The guidelines for funeral and burial benefits must balance respect for those who have given their lives in service to Canada with the reality that such reimbursements come at public expense.

I can tell members that immediate and ongoing support is provided to the family of any member who dies on duty. This support encompasses personal assistance while funeral and burial arrangements are being planned, as well as advice and guidance regarding the benefits available to survivors. Families of fallen members are also advised that there may be funds available through other sources within the RCMP to assist them.

All decisions regarding the funeral arrangements of a fallen member of the RCMP rest with the family. In every case, the family's preferences regarding funeral arrangements are respected.

[*Translation*]

Regimental funerals are a longstanding tradition which gives communities an opportunity to recognize and honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Giving the community and, in reality all Canadians, an opportunity to express their compassion and their respect can increase funeral costs.

[*English*]

In the spring of 2004, the RCMP requested that the Treasury Board review RCMP funeral and burial benefits for their members to revise and modernize the policy. This review is ongoing in consultation and partnership with the Department of National Defence and Treasury Board.

The Commissioner of the RCMP has made a commitment to the families that the review will be done expeditiously and that dialogue with the families will continue until their concerns are addressed.

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I heard the member across the way say that he recognized the sacrifices and that there is support provided to these families, yet one of these women is stuck with a \$20,800 bill after having lost her husband. I do not think that a bill of \$20,800 equates to support or a recognition of the sacrifice that she has made. I do not think that is a fair deal; she was not informed of that.

These women are the equivalent, in my mind, of Silver Cross mothers. They have given a great deal to their country.

Could the member across the way imagine if the Government of Canada had stuck Margaret Trudeau with a substantial bill in the tens of thousands of dollars for the death of her husband, Prime Minister Trudeau? The government would have never dreamed of it, nor should it dream of it in the circumstance of these RCMP widows.

I do not think it is just that a \$20,000 bill is levelled on any of these widows. We have one that I am glad the member recognizes in that a situation has just occurred this weekend, and I would like him to report to this House that the government will do its level—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Hon. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, certainly all of the widows cited where these unfortunate incidents have occurred are part of the review. As I said previously, the arrangements for funerals and regimental funerals and the policy thereof within the RCMP is of long standing. The family requests for the funeral arrangements are always respected.

As I said before, a review of the funeral costs for the four families in question is ongoing. The RCMP is consulting with the families to review each of these situations and the RCMP will take any corrective action deemed necessary as a result of that review.

Adjournment Proceedings

There may be a need to modernize parts of the policy regarding funeral and burial benefits for members of the RCMP. The guidelines for funeral benefits are intended to balance respect for those who have given their lives in service to Canada with the reality that such reimbursements come at public expense.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 18:53 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, November 25, 2004

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government response to petitions

Mr. LeBlanc 1885

Petitions

Health

Mr. Hiebert 1885

Canadian Forces

Mr. Hill 1885

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. LeBlanc 1885

Business of Supply

Mrs. Redman 1885

Motion 1885

(Motion agreed to) 1885

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Opposition Motion — Mirabel Airport

Mr. Harper 1885

Motion 1885

Mr. Boudria 1887

Mr. Laframboise 1888

Mr. Lapierre (Outremont) 1888

Mr. Lemay 1891

Mr. Nicholson 1891

Ms. McDonough 1892

Mr. Laframboise 1892

Mr. Lapierre (Outremont) 1895

Mr. Harris 1895

Mr. Masse 1896

Mrs. Desjarlais 1896

Mrs. Skelton 1898

Mr. Masse 1898

Mr. Nicholson 1899

Mr. Lee 1901

Mr. Laframboise 1902

Mr. Rajotte 1902

Mrs. Jennings 1903

Mr. MacKenzie 1905

Mr. Laframboise 1905

Mr. Lukiwski 1906

Ms. Finley 1906

Mr. Bezan 1907

Mr. Masse 1908

Mr. Poilievre 1908

Mr. Boudria 1909

Ms. St-Hilaire 1910

Mr. Laframboise 1912

Mr. Lévesque 1912

Mr. Solberg 1913

Mr. Bezan 1914

Mr. Scheer 1914

Mr. Poilievre 1914

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Genome Canada

Mr. Tonks 1914

Firearms Program

Mr. Breitzkreuz 1915

Dental Care

Mr. Thibault (West Nova) 1915

The Environment

Mr. Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma) 1915

Multiculturalism

Mrs. Kadis 1915

Government of Canada

Mr. Richardson 1916

Toronto's Alliance Française

Mr. Silva 1916

Violence Against Women

Ms. Brunelle 1916

Community Wheels Program

Ms. Catterall 1916

Prime Minister

Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands) 1916

Macedonian Place

Mr. Temelkovski 1917

Mining Industry

Mr. Godin 1917

Prime Minister

Mr. Anders 1917

University of Sherbrooke

Mr. Cardin 1917

Violence Against Women

Mrs. Yelich 1917

As Prime Minister Awards

Ms. Minna 1917

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Harper 1918

Ms. Sgro 1918

Mr. Harper 1918

Ms. Sgro 1918

Mr. Harper 1918

Ms. McLellan 1918

Mrs. Ablonczy 1918

Ms. Sgro 1918

Mrs. Ablonczy	1918		
Ms. McLellan	1918		
Taxation			
Mr. Gauthier	1919		
Mr. Goodale	1919		
Mr. Gauthier	1919		
Mr. Goodale	1919		
Mr. Loubier	1919		
Mr. Goodale	1919		
Mr. Loubier	1919		
Mr. Goodale	1919		
HIV-AIDS			
Mr. Layton	1919		
Mr. Emerson	1919		
Canada-U.S. Relations			
Mr. Layton	1920		
Ms. McLellan	1920		
Citizenship and Immigration			
Mr. Jaffer	1920		
Ms. Sgro	1920		
Mr. Jaffer	1920		
Mr. Lukiwski	1920		
Ms. Sgro	1920		
Mr. Lukiwski	1920		
Ms. Sgro	1920		
Employment Insurance			
Mr. Lessard	1920		
Mr. Volpe	1921		
Mr. Lessard	1921		
Mr. Volpe	1921		
Cultural Diversity			
Mr. Kotto	1921		
Ms. Frulla	1921		
Mr. Kotto	1921		
Ms. Frulla	1921		
Citizenship and Immigration			
Mr. Kenney	1921		
Ms. McLellan	1921		
Mr. Kenney	1921		
Ms. McLellan	1921		
Canadian Heritage			
Ms. Oda	1922		
Ms. Frulla	1922		
Ms. Oda	1922		
Ms. Frulla	1922		
Health			
Mrs. Kadis	1922		
Mr. Dosanjh	1922		
Housing			
Mr. Blaikie	1922		
Mr. Fontana	1922		
Mr. Blaikie	1922		
Mr. Fontana	1923		
		Government Grants	
		Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) ..	1923
		Ms. Frulla	1923
		M. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) ..	1923
		Ms. Frulla	1923
		National Defence	
		Mr. O'Connor	1923
		Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	1923
		Mr. O'Connor	1923
		Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	1923
		Correctional Service of Canada	
		Mrs. Lavallée	1923
		Mr. Alcock	1924
		Mrs. Lavallée	1924
		Mr. Alcock	1924
		Agriculture	
		Ms. Finley	1924
		Mr. Easter	1924
		Ms. Finley	1924
		Mr. Easter	1924
		The Environment	
		Mr. McGuinty	1924
		Mr. Goodale	1924
		Government Appointments	
		Mr. Preston	1925
		Mr. Alcock	1925
		Forestry Industry	
		Mr. Harris	1925
		Mr. Efford (Avalon)	1925
		Guaranteed Income Supplement	
		Mr. Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)	1925
		Mr. Ianno	1925
		Employment Insurance	
		Mr. D'Amours	1925
		Mr. Volpe	1925
		Health	
		Mr. Ménard (Hochelaga)	1925
		Mr. Dosanjh	1926
		Presence in the Gallery	
		The Speaker	1926
		Business of the House	
		Weekly Statement	
		Mr. Kenney	1926
		Mr. Valeri	1926
		Private Member's Motion No. 163	
		The Speaker	1926
		Mr. Boudria	1926
		Points of Order	
		Tabling of Documents	
		Mr. Lukiwski	1926

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Opposition Motion—Mirabel Airport

Motion	1926
Mr. O'Connor	1927
Mr. Szabo	1928
Mr. Karygiannis	1928
Mr. Boudria	1928
Mr. Harris	1931
Ms. Guay	1931

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Fisheries and Oceans

Mr. Simard (Saint Boniface)	1932
Motion	1932
(Motion agreed to)	1932

Finance

Mr. Simard (Saint Boniface)	1932
Motion	1932
(Motion agreed to)	1932

Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Simard (Saint Boniface)	1932
Motion	1932
(Motion agreed to)	1932

Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Simard (Saint Boniface)	1932
Motion	1932
(Motion agreed to)	1933

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Opposition Motion—Mirabel Airport

Motion	1933
Mr. MacKenzie	1933

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Ukraine Elections

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj	1934
Motion	1934
(Motion agreed to)	1935

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Opposition Motion—Mirabel Airport

Motion	1935
Mr. Karygiannis	1935
Mr. Laframboise	1935
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	1935
Mr. Szabo	1937
Mr. Laframboise	1937
Mr. Julian	1938
Mr. Karygiannis	1939
Mr. Laframboise	1940
Mr. Nicholson	1940
Mr. Siksay	1941
Mr. Reid	1941
Ms. Guay	1942
Mr. Szabo	1943
Mr. Miller	1943
Recorded division deemed requested and deferred	1944

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canada Labour Code

Mr. Clavet	1944
Bill C-263, Second reading	1944
Mr. Godin	1946
Mrs. Longfield	1947
Mr. Komarnicki	1948
Mr. Christopherson	1949
Mr. Blais	1950
Mr. McGuinty	1951

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Terrorism

Mr. Bezan	1952
Mr. Bagnell	1953

Justice

Mr. Trost	1954
Mr. Cotler	1954

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Mr. Anders	1955
Mr. Cullen (Etobicoke North)	1956

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
PWGSC, Ottawa, ON K1A 0S5
Internet: <http://publications.gc.ca>
1-800-635-7943 or Local 613-941-5995

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
TPSGC, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Internet: <http://publications.gc.ca>
1-800-635-7943 ou appel local (613) 941-5995

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:

Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Additional copies may be obtained from Publishing and Depository Services, PWGSC, Ottawa, ON K1A 0S5

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt, TPSGC, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

**On peut obtenir la version française de cette publication en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
TPSGC, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5**