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Wednesday, June 8, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

PORTUGAL WEEK

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, this week across the country Canadians of Portuguese origin are hosting Portugal Week, a festival of celebration and good cheer. The highlight of this week is June 10, the Portuguese national day, a celebration of the many accomplishments of the Portuguese Canadian community. This day has historic significance as well for it is the anniversary of the death of the great poet, Luis Vaz de Camoes.

In my riding of Trinity—Spadina, the week's festivities are organized by the Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario. Among the events scheduled are a soccer tournament, art exhibits, a parade, as well as numerous concerts featuring internationally recognized Portuguese entertainers.

I would like to salute members of the Portuguese community in my riding for their contribution to the cultural life of Toronto and of Canada during this their week of celebration.

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[*Translation*]

COLLÈGE MILITAIRE ROYAL IN SAINT-JEAN

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, on June 6, the Deputy Prime Minister challenged the figures quoted in *Le Devoir* to the effect that officer cadet training at Kingston's military college was more costly than the training provided at the Collège militaire de Saint-Jean.

The Deputy Prime Minister did so in spite of the fact that the Ministerial Committee on Canadian Military Colleges tabled a report in May 1993 containing figures which support the claim that the cost of officer cadet training is higher in Kingston than it is in Saint-Jean. Training costs were assessed at \$71,291 at the Kingston facility, compared to \$58,356 at the college in Saint-

Jean. Training costs are, therefore, 22 per cent higher in Kingston.

This government refuses to reconsider its decision to close the Collège militaire de Saint-Jean. We can only conclude that its decision must be politically motivated.

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[*English*]

KEMANO COMPLETION PROJECT

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, the Kemano completion project in British Columbia is currently under review by the B.C. Utilities Commission. However the terms of reference of this commission do not address reduced water flows into the Nechako and Fraser River systems and the subsequent impact on fisheries, municipalities and industry.

A petition from 1,100 constituents of Comox—Alberni shows the deep concern that this project has the potential of becoming the worst environmental disaster B.C. has yet encountered. The only way to avoid this potential disaster is to ensure a full federal environmental review is carried out on this project. Until this review is conducted, there is no process where all activity that occurred behind closed doors among the previous Conservative government, the B.C. government, DFO and Alcan is out in the open.

I encourage the government to order a full environmental review of the Kemano completion project in order to alleviate the concerns of many British Columbians.

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RIDING FORUM

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to report on the success of Fredericton—York—Sunbury's latest public consultation meeting held last Sunday. Over 100 participants gathered to debate gender related issues ranging from housing and child care to abortion and same sex spousal benefits.

This marked the fourth in a series of riding forums since February. The first dealt with health care, the second, national defence and the third, human resources development. I wish to thank my colleagues from Perth—Wellington—Waterloo for participating in the defence forum, from York North for contributing to the HRD debate and from Halifax for input on gender related issues. Thanks also to provincial ministers Russ King,

S. O. 31

Vaughan Blaney and New Brunswick Deputy Premier Marcelle Mersereau for their contributions.

Canadians want to debate public policy. I am grateful to the more than 40 volunteers and over 400 participants who contributed their time and talent to making this possible in Fredericton—York—Sunbury.

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LITERACY

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, congratulations go out to Katie Johnson, the grade one pupil at Centennial Central elementary school in Arva who recently placed first in a CBC radio story writing competition with her story entitled "Henry". Katie exemplifies the importance of the ability to read and write and the personal rewards they can bring.

As an educator, I recognize there are people in every walk of life who, through no fault of their own, may not be able to read to their children or be able to fill out a job application.

I wish to commend the work of the organizers of the National Adult Literacy Database which is located in my riding of London—Middlesex. I praise the efforts of all of the individuals who are working hard to provide literacy training to thousands of Canadians. Their work and the restoration of the national literacy fund by the government will significantly improve literacy skills.

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JULIETTE CATELANI CORSINI

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, recently Centraide of Montreal honoured one of my constituents with the Antoinette Robidoux prize for her outstanding volunteer contributions. I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Juliette Catelani Corsini who has dedicated the past 40 years of her life to volunteer work. She is one of the unsung heroes of our society.

(1405)

[*Translation*]

For over 40 years, Juliette Corsini has combined her family obligations with her ongoing commitment to the community. She continues to work actively for the Moisson Montréal food bank which she helped found. Mrs. Corsini also devotes her time to Jean-Talon hospital and to L'Arche-Montréal.

As a volunteer, Mrs. Corsini performs numerous tasks, from taking part in food drives to compiling data and handling accounting and secretarial duties.

[*English*]

I wish to congratulate Juliette Catelani Corsini for her constant commitment and enthusiasm. She is a fine example we should all follow. I wish her continued success.

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[*Translation*]

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, according to Mr. André Lalonde who will take over at the helm of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario next month, ACFO intends to reach out and grasp the hand extended to it last Friday by the Leader of the Bloc Québécois.

We congratulate ACFO for its courage and determination and for refusing, in spite of the pressure put on it by Liberal franco-ontarian members and ministers, to allow a partisan line to be dictated to it and for its desire to remain faithful to franco-ontarian interests.

We encourage leaders in the rest of Canada to follow ACFO's example and to come to the realization that their relations with Quebec are about to take on an entirely different complexion.

The Bloc Québécois hopes that this gesture is the first step to achieving greater co-operation between francophones in Quebec and those in the rest of Canada.

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[*English*]

BETTY LARKE

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay a special tribute to one of my constituents, Betty Larke of Morden, Manitoba.

Betty has recently been awarded the 1994 Kinsmen community service award. She has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion auxiliary for 50 years. In 1985 she was awarded the jubilee medal and the meritorious award. Betty has also worked extensively with the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal, Meals on Wheels, the United Way, the community's senior home and her local church.

In this, the Year of the Family, it is very appropriate that we recognize Betty's dedication to her community and her respect for family and values.

Betty Larke has enriched the lives of many people in our community through her strong desire to help others. All Canadians can learn from her example.

OCEANS DAY

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, today, Oceans Day, we celebrate our oceans, the source of life on our planet. First declared in Rio, Oceans Day inspires and challenges us to become caretakers of our ocean environment.

Oceans supply the world's people with more animal protein than any other source. The sea has given us anti-leukemia drugs from sea sponges, bone graft materials from coral, and diagnostic chemicals from red algae. The ocean is the economic lifeline for coastal communities and fish workers by the millions.

For this reason we must keep in mind that human activities have a direct impact on coastal waters. For example, activities which take place inland account for nearly 80 per cent of marine pollution. Inshore dams can cause declining coastal fisheries. Oil spills from ships are to be prevented.

For all these reasons we need to protect and appreciate our oceans.

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UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, the University of Guelph has embarked on a strategic planning process which will create the blueprint for its development into the next century.

The university's planning process allows for consultation with university and non-university participants. The eight task forces will study a number of issues, including identifying external factors, assessing its values and culture, and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs and resources.

The University of Guelph is an important part of Guelph—Wellington. Its remarkable international reputation can only be enhanced by this process.

I congratulate the president of the university, Mordechai Rozanski, on this important initiative. This process will result in a clear vision of the values and the strengths of the university. It will prepare the staff and student body to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to commend the activities of National Transportation Week to the House.

(1410)

As Canadians we are all aware of the major importance transportation has in the life of a nation that borders on three oceans and ranges across mountains, tundra, prairies and rolling countryside.

S. O. 31

On the export market 18 to 45 per cent of the price of Canadian primary products such as coal and forest products is transportation costs. For manufactured goods at least 5 per cent of the price is the result of transportation and in some cases that figure can be as high as 17 per cent. Domestically the cost of transporting goods is equally important. An estimated 40 per cent of provincial exports are sold in regions other than where they are produced.

Government and industry must work together to build the operational links that will ensure the seamless transportation systems that will do justice to the professionalism, dedication and hard work of the hundreds of thousands of men and women who keep our transportation systems running safely, efficiently and effectively.

Please join me in a salute to these Canadians workers during National Transportation Week '94.

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[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the percentage of women in the labour force has been decreasing since 1990. Women between 15 and 24 are the main victims. The Minister of Human Resources Development claims that his Youth Service Corps will help turn the situation around by allowing participants to spend \$2,000 on child care when this money has already been earmarked for other purposes.

This measure discriminates against women since it is primarily women who have custody of children and nearly 60 per cent of these women live below the poverty line. Without a specific program to help them find jobs or go back to school, these women will not be able to get out of this intolerable situation. What is the government waiting for when it should be formulating a job-creation policy that takes these women's reality into account?

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[English]

TELEDEMOCRACY

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, there is just one week to go before voting begins on referendum '94.

I am pleased to advise the House that secret PIN numbers have now been distributed to all registered voters and more than 700 high school students in the riding of North Vancouver, to all MPs and also to yourself, Mr. Speaker. I believe this will be the first secret vote by MPs on any issue other than the election of the Speaker of this House.

When we vote between June 15 and 20 we will be making history as we test a Canadian developed technology that could revolutionize democracy as we know it. I would like to thank

S. O. 31

MT&T Technologies Inc. of Halifax for pioneering this system of electronic voting.

I hope that all members will take part in this experiment in direct democracy.

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GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, the price of gasoline has gone up again in Regina and other parts of Canada with no explanation. There have been no new taxes and the price of crude has declined from one year ago.

The price of gas jumped three cents a litre for no reason except to make oil companies richer. Energy consumers are angry and want an investigation into why they must pay more to line the pockets of big oil giants.

The government must put an end to the gouging at the pumps now. Canadians need an energy price review commission to encourage fair competitive pricing and to review monopoly pricing.

Last year Esso Canada made a profit of \$582 million and 75 per cent of that money went to the U.S. as dividends. Companies like Esso show little respect for the consumers in this country. Huge profits do not mean fair prices but higher prices. Why? We want to know why.

The government must put an end to this outrageous practice of price gouging. I look forward to seeing what action the government will take on this matter.

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[*Translation*]**DEMOCRACY**

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I was relieved to hear the Leader of the Opposition yesterday make a commitment to respect the democratic process guaranteeing everyone the right to express themselves freely on our country's future. He said that the last 30 years have led us to a dead end. What a gross misstatement! In the last 30 years, Canada and Quebec have enjoyed the highest rate of economic growth and the highest standard of living of all OECD countries.

Just imagine what this country would be like if instead of splitting up, we joined forces. It remains to be seen whether Mr. Parizeau shares the ideas of his friend and ally in opposition regarding the democratic process. It is ironic that the Bloc leader tries to pass himself off as a champion of democracy when his own troops and his separatist confederate threaten to boycott and retaliate against any group or institution daring to question their independence plans.

That is a very strange conception of freedom of expression!

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(1415)

[*English*]**OCEANS DAY**

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, today is Oceans Day. First declared on June 8, 1992 during the Rio earth summit, Oceans Day is meant to remind us and challenge us to become better caretakers of our oceans' environment.

Regardless of where you live, marine life and oceans are important to every Canadian. Not only does what happens in the marine environment affect us but what we do affects it.

No better example of this exists than in my riding where the sea is an economic lifeline for many coastal communities. This lifeline has been placed under considerable strain over the past few years.

Oceans Day serves to remind us that individuals can make a difference through the many projects, exhibits and conferences which are taking place today across the country.

I encourage all members of the House to help raise public awareness among our constituents about the importance of oceans to our lives.

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CANADIAN SPECIAL SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, the degree of danger and very real battle conditions that our brave men and women of the armed forces are facing in the former Yugoslavia is a source of both worry and pride.

We feel pride when we recognize our maple leaf emblazoned on the uniforms of those brave people who are putting their lives on the line to represent Canada and to bring a modicum of justice and humanity to that desperate part of the world.

Despite the obvious bravery of our troops and the harsh battle conditions they can be exposed to, we have not chosen to honour our troops with the Canadian Special Service Medal. This medal was authorized in 1984 and was created to recognize the service of Canadians in special circumstances. It has been awarded to Canadian troops serving with NATO in western Europe and has not been extended to our brave men and women in the former Yugoslavia.

I pray that the minister of defence will realize the oversight of the department in not extending this award and will take steps to bestow recognition as that recognition has most definitely been earned.

EDUCATION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today in honour of the students in my riding of Hamilton West and across Canada who will graduate from elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions this month.

This year over 260,000 students will graduate from high school, over 83,000 will graduate from college and approximately 170,000 will graduate from university.

It is my hope that as these students progress through our system of education and training they will continue to achieve new levels of accomplishment in the lifelong learning process.

I have said in the House before that education will be the salvation of our society. In the present information age this statement is proving to be more and more important as we approach the 21st century.

I am sure that all members of the House will join me in congratulating the class of 1994.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

JOB CREATION

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in a speech he gave yesterday in Paris at the annual meeting of the OECD, the Minister of Human Resources Development said that Canada's present job-creation program does not fit the socio-economic reality and must be revised. I quote from the Canadian press, where the minister is reported to have said: "We must build a new program that will put Canadians back to work, while ensuring income security for those who need it."

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Does she admit that this statement by her fellow minister is a stinging denunciation of the government's job-creation strategy, which only creates temporary jobs in the infrastructure program? Are we to conclude that this government will finally do something specific to create jobs?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the opposition leader's statement. Obviously, we are reforming social security because the present system is not working.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I believe that I must apologize to

Oral Questions

the Deputy Prime Minister, who told us yesterday that ministers' trips to Europe were worthwhile.

In fact, this trip has brought out the truth, an admission of failure, since in this moment of sincerity, the minister admitted abroad that the government's job-creation program, the one in the red book, is not working and will be replaced.

I would ask the minister to continue to own up and tell us whether her government intends to review its budget strategy, which involves reducing the deficit on the backs of the poor by taking food from their mouths, as the finance minister himself said, the very man who imposed an unprecedented cut in unemployment insurance benefits.

(1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the minister did not say. If the Leader of the Opposition is interested in the truth, perhaps I can read exactly what the minister said, and I quote:

The message is that it is time for a change and we must move toward a very strong approach to relieving structural unemployment. It is very much a part of our unemployment strategy.

Obviously the reason for the social security reform is because there are too many unemployed people who have not found jobs for weeks, months and years. We have a structural problem and that is what we are going to try and solve.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister should not send the Deputy Prime Minister to Europe; it seems that things are clearer in Europe when Canadian affairs are discussed.

I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister if she admits that the substantial cut in unemployment insurance benefits penalizes even more heavily local communities in several regions of Quebec and Atlantic Canada, where a large proportion of seasonal workers face conditions that restrict their eligibility for unemployment insurance.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, trips to Europe were mentioned. It seems to me that the hon. member, when he was in Europe a long time ago, was a federalist.

While things are happening in Europe, it is also obvious that the reason the Minister of Human Resources Development is now adopting a new social policy is that workers in Matapédia, Matane, Lac-Saint-Jean and Roberval have not found work for years. That is why the system must be changed.

*Oral Questions***COLLÈGE MILITAIRE ROYAL IN SAINT-JEAN**

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, over the last few days, the federal government demonstrated on numerous occasions that it was constantly improvising when negotiating with the Quebec government regarding the future of the military college in Saint-Jean. This is evidenced by the project proposed by the president of the Université de Sherbrooke, who is anxiously waiting for an agreement between the two governments.

Is the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs aware that each day that negotiations with the Quebec government are delayed jeopardizes the implementation of a project such as the one proposed by the president of the Université de Sherbrooke, since the teachers at CMR may make commitments to other institutions and no longer be available? Is the minister aware of that?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, the object of the ongoing negotiations with the government of Quebec is to adequately solve the issue of the military college in Saint-Jean. It is much more important to find the right solution and solve the problem for good than to make a hasty decision which might leave some issues unresolved.

There is no doubt that the teachers at CMR can find jobs in Kingston and elsewhere, but there is no great need to hurry. The hon. member should not worry about imaginary problems.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, how must we interpret the minister's comments? He says that there is no great need to hurry, but his government is shutting down the military college in Saint-Jean.

After creating all kinds of problems for the region with the unjustified and unjustifiable closure of the college, does the minister not realize that people in Saint-Jean and in Quebec are tired of his apathy, his lack of initiative and his inability to propose any solution to that issue?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, getting carried away will not help solve the issue. The military college in Saint-Jean will remain open until the spring of 1995. Consequently, the important thing to do right now is to arrive at a solution which solves all the problems regarding the college, and which meets the needs of both the province of Quebec and the federal government. There is no doubt that the spending cuts which were made in the defence budget have served Canada well, since they allow us to put our budget back in order. This issue is of much greater scope than the problems related to the military college in Saint-Jean.

(1425)

*[English]***ARMS SALES**

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Canadian government has already approved a deal to sell helicopters to Columbia and is now considering the sale of coastal frigates to Taiwan. Concerning these sales the Minister of Foreign Affairs said last week that we have a process of reviewing our sales of arms abroad. We are doing it only under very specific conditions and every sale is reviewed carefully before being allowed.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister explain whether the guidelines used in reviewing these sales are the guidelines established and employed by the previous government or whether this is a new set of guidelines developed by the present government?

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. Absolutely no consideration is being given by the government to sales of Canadian patrol frigates to Taiwan right now.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting reply but it had nothing to do with my question.

Maybe I can repeat the question. We are simply asking if the guidelines that are being applied to these arms sales are the guidelines that were developed and used by the previous government of which many members were critical or are these new guidelines developed by the current government? If they are, could the parliamentary secretary tell us what they are.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)): Mr. Speaker, that is a hypothetical question but I will answer part of it.

The sale of military equipment to Taiwan is subject to standard export control procedures and policies. We consider any such sales on a case by case basis and consistent with our one China policy.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question.

The sale to Columbia involves so-called civilian versions of the Bell model 212 helicopter. This civilian distinction avoids the necessity of gaining approval under federal defence export regulations. Concerns have arisen however because it is relatively easy to convert the model 212 into a military attack vehicle.

In light of these facts can the parliamentary secretary please explain what the guiding philosophy of the government is regarding international sales of arms, especially to countries

Oral Questions

like Columbia whose military has a history of human rights violation. [English]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs I am pleased to notify the hon. member that these helicopters are certified as civil by Transport Canada. They are not certified as military helicopters.

This was raised in our foreign affairs review policy by some witnesses. It came out that some of these helicopters will be used to fight the drug trade which is affecting our society in Canada. The hon. member also knows the country has just gone through an earthquake so these helicopters will come in handy for rescue and humanitarian relief.

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(1430)

[Translation]

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, the CRTC commissioners, who were unable to reach a consensus, refused to issue a licence for one of the two French-language pay-per-view proposals. This decision was roundly criticized by many parties, including the Government of Quebec, since it would deprive Francophones of an important cultural tool.

How can the Minister of Canadian Heritage justify a decision that is blatantly unfair to Francophones, in Canada and Quebec, when Anglophones have enjoyed a similar service for some time?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, it was not my decision and consequently it requires no justification on my part. I explained yesterday that there was a procedure for parties to appeal or to ask the Government of Canada to refer the decision back to the CRTC for review. I understand that the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications is interested in taking this route, but I have not yet received official notice from the minister.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that this decision came about as a result of a split between the CRTC's Anglophone and Francophone commissioners who were unable to agree on one of two projects, with the Francophones supporting the Chapiteau project from Quebec and the Anglophones favouring the project by Astral, from Toronto?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I explained that I could not judge and be judged. If and when I become the judge, I will have an opinion, but meanwhile I will remain silent.

FINANCE

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

In 1987 the Conservative Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson, excluded his home town of Toronto from the list of international banking centres in Canada. The opposition Liberals opposed this exclusion and the mayor of Toronto, now a Liberal cabinet minister, initiated a lawsuit against the federal government. He described the Tory decision as crass politics at its worst.

Will the minister now reverse this unfair Tory decision and designate Toronto as an international banking centre?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the pros and cons, the benefits of an international banking centre, in fact the whole concept of designating certain areas of the country for specific tax treatment, is something the government has under examination.

When we have completed the examination I will be delighted to respond to the member.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

On Monday the Toronto *Star* reported that the lawsuit against the government has recently been revived. Will the Liberal government act swiftly to prevent the useless waste of taxpayers' dollars for unnecessary legal defence?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I will take the question as notice. I thank the government House leader for giving me advice.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Yesterday in the National Assembly, the Quebec Minister of Culture asked the federal government to review the CRTC's decision on pay-per-view television, in French of course, and I quote: "I would ask my colleague Michel Dupuy to submit to his cabinet a memorandum aimed at persuading the CRTC to review its decision. Pay-per-view is the way of the future—"

Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage intend to act on this urgent request from his Quebec counterpart and will he personally intervene in cabinet, which can instruct the CRTC, as provided under Section 18(1) of the Act—

Oral Questions

(1435)

The Speaker: The question, please.

Mr. Fillion: Of course, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister have to ask cabinet to change this decision, as provided under Section 18(1) of the Broadcasting Act?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the answer is substantially what I said in reply to a question from the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata.

I read the papers, of course, including the article that attracted the attention of the hon. member. I said that I was waiting for the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications to get in touch with me. Yesterday, I mentioned that I had asked for an analysis of the CRTC's decisions. Once I have heard from the minister and the analysis is ready, I will be able to make some decisions.

The Speaker: The question, please!

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary. Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage think it is acceptable and fair for the CRTC to have granted eight licences out of ten, all to English-language channels, which means that once again, Francophones will have to pay for channels whose programming does not reflect their cultural interests?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I trust that I expressed myself clearly in French. I said that as soon as the minister is approached for his views on changing the CRTC's decision, the minister becomes a judge and it is therefore inappropriate for the minister who may have to act as a judge to give his views before hearing all sides of the case. That is where the matter stands now, and I hope I made myself sufficiently clear in my answers to previous questions and to the question that was just put.

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[English]

**SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH
COUNCIL**

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

At a time when social programs are being reviewed because of a lack of funds and health care transfers are being cut back because of a lack of funds, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council is still dishing out ridiculous grants like \$94,000 to study the resolution of unfinished emotional business with a significant other.

When will the government take action to put an end to this sort of nonsensical waste of taxpayers' money?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be highly unethical for the federal government to be making granting decisions about an independent body like the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, it is tough to stay cool.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has a staff of 100 and a budget of \$100.1 million, equivalent to a year's worth of taxes for 22,871 taxpayers and certainly symbolic of government waste to most Canadians.

How can the government continue to support \$16,000 to investigate attacks on aristocratic behaviour in 18th century Britain and \$59,800 to study ecology and history in the insular Quoddy region?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think there is a very important principle here that seems to escape the hon. member.

Under the budget of the Parliament of Canada there are certain moneys allocated to the Reform Party for research. There may be certain people in Parliament who think that research money is wasted. The fact is that is your choice.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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(1440)

[Translation]

**CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Yesterday, in the House, the minister said that he understood the disappointment felt by the francophone and Acadian communities, and he added that he could not be both a judge and a party at the same time, which he repeated again today. He suggested instead that the francophone and Acadian communities appeal the CRTC's decision regarding the French-language all-news channel.

Does the minister share the opinion expressed by the ACFO President to the effect that, once again, a CRTC decision places the francophone and Acadian communities at the mercy of local cable companies? Does he agree with the ACFO president who said that, once again, our rights are being infringed upon?

Oral Questions

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, all these people have to do is give me some kind of a notice and I will be able to start the proceedings. I am waiting for them to do that. They stated that they intended to take such action; that is what I heard yesterday; when they approach the Minister of Canadian Heritage, he will take the appropriate action.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree that, contrary to what he alluded to yesterday and again today in the House, in addition to the appeal mechanism available to citizens, the federal cabinet may also, and the legislation is quite clear in this respect, act on its own to do justice to the francophone and Acadian communities, and demand that the CRTC reverse its decision? The legislation is quite clear on that; we can provide him with a copy of it.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, when I am told that I will be contacted, I have the decency to wait to be contacted. I do not behave like members opposite who pose as messengers for the francophone communities, in the hope of scoring political points. I am waiting to hear officially from them, and then I will make the appropriate decisions.

* * *

[*English*]**GRAIN TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of agriculture.

Back in mid-May, when the minister of agriculture met in Winnipeg with industry representatives about solving the grain transportation problems for this year and for future years, the minister established a number of committees that were to report back in two weeks.

Have those committees reported back? If so, has the minister decided what action should be taken on the part of the government?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, besides responding directly to the hon. member's question I would like to congratulate him and thank him and all members of the agriculture and transport subcommittees of the House that investigated certain problems we experienced this year in our grain transportation system.

I can advise the House that I will be announcing later today a package of changes in this area. I believe the hon. member and other members of the transport and agriculture subcommittees will see that very many of their recommendations are included in the announcement I am about to make.

* * *

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

On June 6 my colleague from Simcoe Centre asked the government if all documents related to the Pearson airport deal would be released to the public. He was promised that the Minister of Transport would respond to that question as soon as possible.

I would like to ask if the hon. minister would respond to that question today.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we are trying to conclude the cancellation of the contract at Pearson with the negotiator.

(1445)

The matter is before the House in terms of the legislation, so I would not want to contravene the rules of the House. The member will know that a lot of this involves companies and commercial undertakings that are not just directly related to the Pearson project. I want to say to the hon. member that when this matter is concluded, all material that is appropriate, that can be released and what can be legally provided to the public will be provided.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. minister for his answer.

I would like to ask him when he is making his decision as to the release of these documents if he would include as interested parties the Canadian taxpayers who are actually going to be footing the bill for this.

Will he include in his decision of releasing the documents that they are very concerned about the way this deal is put together and the amounts of moneys that are going to be paid out if any? They demand to have an answer and an assurance that this type of deal will never again happen.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the member recognized implicitly in his question, Canadians know that this deal was questionable and certainly not in either the public interest or in the best interest of Canadian taxpayers.

I have no doubt that whatever decision is arrived at with respect to compensation for out of pocket expenses precluding any compensation for lobbyist fees or foregone profits, the Auditor General of Canada as well as Canadian taxpayers will want to scrutinize in a very careful way every penny if in fact any money is paid in compensation. That is why the minister who is given fairly wide discretionary powers under the legislation that is presently before the House will be very careful in making sure he recognizes his fiduciary responsibility to the Canadian taxpayers.

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[*Translation*]**SOCIAL HOUSING**

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Today, the Minister of Public Works is attending a federal-provincial conference of housing ministers in Bathurst, New Brunswick. This conference is particularly important because the federal government totally

Oral Questions

withdrew its funding for social housing and is now thinking, it seems, of reducing the \$2.1 billion budget of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Would the government commit itself to using the savings the minister claims to be realizing, exclusively for the construction of social housing, that is to say low-cost rental housing, co-operative housing and non-profit housing?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, clearly the minister is aware of his responsibilities regarding the funds available for social housing. I can tell my colleague that, today, the minister responsible is in the beautiful city of Bathurst, New Brunswick, negotiating with his provincial counterparts.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Deputy Prime Minister. Given that the Liberal government is not very kindly disposed towards the people most in need, would the Deputy Prime Minister, at the very least, promise that there will be no rent increase for the thousands of social housing tenants in Quebec and Canada, since these people are already in a very difficult situation?

[English]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members of the House recognize just how difficult it is for individuals and families with very limited means to be able to provide adequate housing for themselves and their families.

That is why, although we made a commitment to retain some \$120 million in expenditures in the social housing program, ministers of all provinces including the minister responsible for the Government of Canada are meeting in Bathurst, New Brunswick today trying to find solutions to these very difficult problems facing Canadians at a time when we have very restricted resources.

* * *

WRITING THRU RACE CONFERENCE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The "Writing Thru Race" conference sponsored by the Writer's Union of Canada has made no changes to its exclusionary policy. Racism is racism and you cannot hide it behind a banner of intellectual rationalization.

The minister stated last Friday that he would get the facts on the "Writing Through Race" conference.

(1450)

The facts of this discriminatory conference are quite simple. Parts of the conference exclude white writers from participating and the Canada Council has committed \$10,000 to support it.

Now that the minister has the facts will he issue a ministerial directive to the Canada Council to immediately withdraw its funding for this conference?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage does not issue directives to the Canada Council, an arm's length institution.

However, the writer's union did apply for financial support from programs from the ministry of heritage, which is under my jurisdiction, and I am not going to proceed with this request.

The reason why I am not doing it is that, as I said in this House, I am profoundly against discrimination as a principle.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, if the minister is so profoundly disturbed by discriminatory practices as evidenced by this conference I find that funding it is a very strange way of addressing what he has just stated.

Further to this, two departments in the ministry have been approached for funding but neither of those departments has made a decision at this point regarding its financial support.

Expecting that the minister will do the right thing, will he also direct the organizations in his ministry not to fund the racist and discriminatory conference that will take place in Vancouver at the end of this month?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I conclude that as I am not funding from departmental resources I am doing the right thing.

As I tried to explain, the Canada Council is an arm's length institution and the meaning of arm's length is precisely that the minister does not issue instructions concerning specific decisions taken by the board of directors.

* * *

CHINA

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific.

This weekend marks the fifth anniversary of the events at Tiananmen Square. Can the secretary of state assure the House and all Canadians that the government remains committed to human rights in China and, in particular, that the pursuit of our expanding trade links with China will be used as a way to advance human rights in that country?

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Rosedale, the vice-chair of the foreign affairs committee, for the question and for his concern about an issue that is so dear to my heart.

Oral Questions

I understand the hon. member has been travelling across the country with his work on the committee, and the issue of human rights in China has been raised consistently. I am sure that we will have the support of the House and Canadians for advocating human rights in China, and I appreciate that.

I would like to reaffirm to the member and the House the conviction of the government concerning the issue of human rights in China. The situation remains a concern to us and there are different efforts being ensured to advance that cause.

* * *

[Translation]

DOUBLE HULLED SHIPS

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, for several days, the Minister of the Environment has been claiming that government regulations concerning double-hulled ships in Canada are in force, despite a contrary opinion from the legal service of the Department of Transport.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. As the one responsible for applying the Canada Shipping Act, does the Minister of Transport confirm, as his legal advisors indicate, that there is no regulation now in force under this act with respect to double-hulled ships?

(1455)

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that international agreements on ships plying Canadian waters and those anywhere else on earth allow 15 years to comply with international regulations.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, since there is no Canadian law, can the Minister of Transport inform his colleague in Environment that there are no regulations on double-hulled ships and that such regulations should be passed urgently in order to avoid environmental disasters?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, for the third time, I even gave the hon. member a copy of the law yesterday. Maybe he did not want to take it, but on page 1407, Chapter 36 of the Statutes of Canada, he will find the text of a law that was passed in 1993. Do you still want a copy?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. members, you know that from time to time it is necessary to have books to quote from in the House, but I would ask you all not to raise any books or papers.

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Canadians have been constantly demanding that the government abolish the current MP pension plan which allows members to collect benefits after only six years of service.

The Prime Minister has stated that his government is reviewing this overly generous plan but that we have four or five years to deal with it.

We do not need a commission to tell us what needs to be done. We have already suggested changes that can be implemented immediately.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister commit to bringing the MPs' retirement compensation package in line with the private sector?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, the House has been previously informed, as hon. members know, that there was a study commissioned by the previous government that was brought to a committee of the House and is now under study by a committee of the House as provided for by the Parliament act with respect to compensation including pensions for members of Parliament.

The government has made it clear that it intends to bring about revisions to the pension plan for MPs. As soon as the Lapointe commission submits its report, which I understand will be about mid-July, we will examine the results. We will look at the recommendations. We will then proceed to deal with the matter of MPs' pensions and other compensation factors.

I have indicated previously to the House that we expect to deal with the matter of MPs' pensions prior to the end of the year.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Mid-July simply is not good enough. It has become public knowledge that the Leader of the Official Opposition, a man dedicated to the break-up of Canada, will become eligible for his pension on June 20.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister not agree that this alone constitutes a good enough reason to reform this extravagant MP pension plan?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, if any member of this Parliament is to receive a pension, first of all

Routine Proceedings

it is after they cease to be a member of the House. They must qualify under the provisions of the act to do so.

I understand the question that is being asked by the hon. member, but I fully expect that the hon. Leader of the Opposition will qualify as a Canadian citizen to receive his pension for many years.

* * *

NATIONAL FORUM ON HEALTH

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Minister of Health has not been able and/or has refused to release the terms of reference for the national health forum. The Prime Minister will be chair of that forum.

(1500)

Also, if the current cost-sharing between federal, provincial and territorial governments continues there will be no federal funding for health care by the year 2015 and some provinces will not receive federal funding in the life of this Parliament.

Given the above, can the Deputy Prime Minister guarantee on behalf of the government that there will be a rebalancing of cash transfers to provinces and territories to ensure that the principles of the Canada Health Act can be maintained and enforced?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, obviously the Minister of Health and the Prime Minister are working very hard with the provinces to ensure that the process of the forum is in fact a very productive one. That will obviously be one of the issues on the agenda at the forum.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of agriculture.

In the red book we talked about the whole farm safety net program. When can we expect the government to take action on this commitment and are producers taking part in the process?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, in February I convened a meeting in Winnipeg with 40 or 50 farm organizations from across the country in addition to provincial and federal government officials. Their objective was to consider the future need and shape of a national safety net system based upon the whole farm concept that was described in the red book at the time of the election.

A national safety nets committee involving these 40 or 50 farm organizations is now in place. They have been working hard through the spring and early summer. Producers are very much leading the process. Their work is augmented by and co-ordinated with the ongoing work of federal and provincial

officials. Their work has also involved consultations with all members of the House who have on occasion expressed an interest in making representations about the safety net system.

The objective is to have recommendations in place to present to federal and provincial ministers of agriculture when we meet for our regular meeting in July in Winnipeg. Our objective after that is to begin the implementation of the whole farm system by the beginning of 1995.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Gombosuren, Minister for External Relations of Mongolia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Jerome C. Dill, Minister of Human Affairs and Information of the Government of Bermuda.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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

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

* * *

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform members of the House of the government's plans to address several problems experienced during the current crop year in the transportation of western Canadian grain to market. These actions are intended to help clear up this year's difficulties. Even more important, they will help ensure that those difficulties are not repeated in the next or subsequent crop years.

(1505)

Members of the House will be aware that significant delays were experienced this year in getting western Canada's grain to market. The reasons for this were several. The flooding of the Mississippi River system forced United States' shippers to turn to other modes of transportation. This tied up rail cars in the United States that would normally have been available for lease to Canadian rail companies. The turnaround time on rail cars in the United States is longer than in Canada. A severe winter limited unloading at country elevators and slowed the movement through the system. A labour dispute on the west coast

Routine Proceedings

added to the congestion of ships waiting in harbour to take on Canadian grain.

While I was on a trade mission to the Pacific rim earlier this spring, I was told in no uncertain terms by our customers that their purchases of grain and oilseeds from Canada were not being delivered on time and that this was disrupting their own operations. While Canada's reputation as a quality grain producer helped the country through this year's difficulties, our customers told me that unless we improved our delivery record they would begin to look elsewhere for more reliable suppliers.

While I was in Asia the subcommittees of the agriculture and agri-food committee and the transport committee of this House were working in Ottawa to produce valuable recommendations to help alleviate several of the problems we were experiencing.

As soon as I returned from the Pacific rim I called an urgent meeting of key players in the western grain transportation sector. The meeting was held in Winnipeg on May 16. There were representatives from the grain companies, the railroads, the Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Grain Transportation Agency, the unions, and the maritime employers. I presented them with a list of initiatives including many of the subcommittees' recommendations. I asked that group in Winnipeg for their input and advice.

Shortly before that meeting was held, members of the Grain Workers Union and owners of the west coast grain terminals reached an agreement that allows for weekend unloading, thus reducing some of the bottleneck at the ports.

From a backlog of 41 vessels waiting for grain on the west coast when our problems were at their height late in the winter and earlier this spring, we now have that number of waiting ships down to 15 as of this week. That is the number which is considered close to reasonable for the efficient use of the ports. The railways also will have increased their fleet this month to more than 30,000 grain cars, compared to 24,600 in mid-February.

What is critical though is that we cannot afford a repeat of this past year. I want to congratulate the labour and industry representatives and the members of the two subcommittees of this House for their dedication to solving the myriad of problems that have plagued western grain transportation these past several months.

Incorporating the work of those subcommittees, the industry leaders, the labour representatives and advice from Transport Canada, Human Resources Development and my own Department of Agriculture and Agri-food, I wish to announce the following measures with the support of my colleagues the

Minister of Transport and the Minister of Human Resources Development.

First, the system of back hauling grain from Thunder Bay as far as Winnipeg just to qualify for subsidies under the Western Grain Transportation Act is going to end. This practice which has crept into our system in the last period of time is nothing more than a waste of our resources and an inefficient use of our rolling stock.

Second, a system of demurrage and storage charges for rail cars will be developed. Currently there is no system of penalties or incentives in place to encourage shippers of grain to use and return rail cars to the general fleet expeditiously.

(1510)

These two changes require amendments to the Western Grain Transportation Act. We propose to make these changes with an implementation date of January 1, 1995. Thus those who may be entering into contracts now have notice that changes are to be expected.

Third, if the railways do not deliver sufficient rolling stock in the future to accommodate grain shipments, the government will use provisions of the Western Grain Transportation Act that apply to sanctions and hold backs where necessary.

Fourth, a policy will be developed to define the circumstances under which private cars could be added to the general grain fleet for western grain movement, if we are again faced with severe rail car shortages.

Fifth, we will end the maximum elevation tariffs at the west coast and Thunder Bay to increase competition among elevator companies and to allow them to charge at sufficient levels to cover the increased costs of weekend loading at port.

Finally, the forecasting of rail car requirements will be improved, as will be the co-ordination of inland loading and movement of rail cars with vessel arrivals at the ports.

We will be working with the group of key leaders who met in Winnipeg on May 16 to make sure that these changes are in fact implemented as quickly as possible. We will be looking beyond that group as well for input on longer term measures to prepare our western grain transportation system for future challenges.

In that spirit I have spoken today by teleconference with 34 of the senior leaders of relevant farm organizations, businesses and institutions who are the stakeholders in these processes for both the short term and the long haul.

Through the changes we are beginning to make, we fully expect Canada will be able to restore its reputation as a reliable supplier of quality grain. Nothing less is acceptable.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, the issue of western grain transportation is not a new one. The crisis that just occurred is the result of the apathy of the federal government which, for over 20 years now, has never done anything to solve this problem. Contrary to comments made by the Minister of Agriculture, the increase in American demand for grain was not the primary cause of the crisis in grain transportation in Canada. This factor merely helped show the lack of planning and flexibility of the grain transportation system in Canada. The problem is not a temporary one.

This year, the Grain Transportation Agency will not be able to deliver more than 30 million tonnes of grain, compared to over 35 million in the past. Major changes must be made to meet the needs of foreign importers as well as of Canadian and Quebec buyers. Indeed, it is disappointing to see that it will have been necessary for the Minister of Agriculture to go to Asia to realize how serious the problem of grain supply is, while right here several buyers have suffered major losses because of grain shortage or delays in delivery.

Something must be done urgently. The estimated \$35 million in demurrage charges in the West, as well as sales of 2 million tonnes of grain which were either lost or delayed, confirm the existence of a crisis. In fact, Canada's credibility and reliability as a major grain exporter are being questioned. I am pleased to see that the Minister of Agriculture intends to make changes in the grain transportation system. However, I would have preferred to hear him tomorrow, since he is meeting the Sub-Committee on Grain Transportation this evening.

(1515)

This would have helped, among other things, clarify some conservatively worded recommendations, and add other changes to those intended. The minister says that the system of back hauling grain shipped from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg, merely to be eligible for subsidies provided under the Western Grain Transportation Act, is going to disappear.

I fully agree with this decision, which should have been made a long time ago. Having to take rail cars to Thunder Bay results in high costs, since the turn-around time for those cars is extended by several days. Each year, close to 2 million tonnes of grain use that itinerary.

But what is really serious is the fact that, during the crisis, when there was a shortage of cars and when Canada was losing buyers, the National Transportation Agency did not even have the common sense of abolishing this obligation. This is a prime example of the system's lack of flexibility.

And what about grain transiting through the Panama Canal on the way to Europe? I raise this issue because the problem goes far beyond the waste which results from the system of back hauling grain. The minister does not deal with the issue of the under-utilization of the Port of Thunder Bay and the St. Lawrence River. The Sub-Committee on Grain Transportation recommended to the Minister of Transport to ask the Canadian Wheat Board to ship more American-bound grain through Thunder Bay.

The same recommendation could be made regarding grain exports to Europe, through the St. Lawrence Seaway. Indeed, the under-utilization of the St. Lawrence Seaway has now reached a critical level. Since 1984, the Seaway has lost more than half of the volume of exported grain. Obviously, the Minister of Agriculture shows little concern for this issue; yet, this is a totally irrational utilization of our transportation network.

Moreover, the minister gives no indication as to his intentions regarding the subsidy for Western grain transportation. I remind the minister that the Bloc Québécois will oppose any transfer of the subsidy which might result in an unfair competition between farm producers.

The minister must propose concrete measures to improve forecasts regarding the need for rail cars, and to co-ordinate domestic loading and the movement of rail cars with the arrival of ships. The minister must not merely make pious wishes. The problem is not a new one and we can no longer wait and risk to once again paralyse our supply system.

[English]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide a brief response to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's statement on the grain transportation system of today.

The minister explained for us in the House what in my judgment was not just a problem or series of problems this year but a real crisis in the grain transportation system. While some of the stakeholders in the transportation industry did not see it as a crisis, I believe most did; certainly farmers who could not get their grain moved.

Granted, a unique set of problems did occur this year with the weather and farmers know a lot about weather problems. I believe we should be able to develop a system that can adjust to extreme weather problems. We must try to be prepared for eventualities of all kinds.

The minister also clearly articulated the repercussions of the marketplace to our problems. Our reputation as a reliable grain provider was questioned by our customers. Essentially they issued an ultimatum to us: "Improve your delivery record or we will be shopping somewhere else". That is very serious.

The minister then outlined some of the ways we have been trying to deal with this crisis, including referring the work of the subcommittee which had two days of emergency hearings and the May 16 meeting of concerned parties in Winnipeg.

(1520)

We on this side concurred with the report of the co-chairman of the subcommittee, believing that some good solutions were proposed. In all honesty I do question the impact or benefit of the May 16 meeting in Winnipeg when the subcommittee had just heard some of the same witnesses and when certain stakeholders, including farmers, were not at the meeting.

Once again farmers are left out of the problem solving equation and yet they are the ones who bear the brunt and the cost of a crisis such as this. I would implore the minister to get farmers more directly involved in issues that directly affect them.

I have said before and will say again that farmers can fix almost anything if they can get their hands on it.

The minister noted developments which have helped alleviate the situation. A west coast labour settlement occurred, although it does not seem to be entirely satisfactory and in fact may only be temporary. The railways have also increased their fleets.

One amazing thing that many of my colleagues who sat on the subcommittee were incredulous over is why the turnaround time for rail cars on a trip to the ports is not any faster than it was 80 years ago. Surely there must be room for improvement there.

The minister also stated for us today the lessons that we have hopefully learned from this crisis and announced a list of six steps that he and the Minister of Transport will implement by January 1, 1995. Generally we believe they are good and we believe we are on the right track. We would urge, however, that the entire system be overhauled so that there are commercial and financial incentives on the part of all to improve efficiencies and services. If each stakeholder in the entire system held up their end of the bargain and were rewarded for doing so and penalized for not doing so, the system could move toward more excellence.

Farmers are held responsible for their actions, and so should everyone else in the system.

What is also needed is legislation to prevent labour disputes from holding up product movement while still allowing for a collective bargaining processes. My colleague from Lethbridge and I are presently bringing forward legislation to address this.

We on this side of the track are willing to work with those on the other side of the track to ensure that this crisis does not happen again, to revitalize our world-wide reputation and to help farmers get their grains and their goods to market.

Routine Proceedings

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development regarding Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Canada Wildlife Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

[*English*]

FINANCE

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

Pursuant to an order of the House dated Tuesday, April 19, 1994, the Standing Committee on Finance studied Bill C-11, an act to amend the Excise Act, the Customs Act and the Tobacco Sales to Young Persons Act, and has agreed to report the bill with amendments.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 27th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding technical amendments to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

* * *

(1525)

[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-257, an Act to amend the Auditor General Act and the Parliament of Canada Act (appointment of the Auditor General of Canada).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Oxford for seconding my motion.

I am pleased to table today a bill whose purpose is to change the way the Auditor General of Canada is appointed. The Prime Minister now appoints the Auditor General without consulting the House, and I would like the act to contain a provision whereby, in the event of a vacancy, the House of Commons Committee on Public Accounts would consider the proposed candidates and submit to the House of Commons a report recommending the appointment of a competent person. In my opinion, after the House of Commons receives the report from the committee, it should be up to the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons to choose the next Auditor General of Canada.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

This bill would ensure a greater independence of the Auditor General of Canada, would make the House of Commons responsible for his or her appointment, and I believe strongly that it would help us to better account to Canadians for public funds.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to move the following motion:

That notwithstanding Standing Orders 132 and 140, a petition for a private bill from Garth Wagner and others, presented on Friday, June 3, 1994, and reported on by the clerk of petitions on Monday, June 6, 1994, be deemed to have been filed within the required time limit and received by this House.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8, 1994 the Speaker shall entertain no quorum calls nor shall he receive any dilatory motion.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RIGHTS AND STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That a member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons be authorized to travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick, to attend a meeting of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, to be held from June 23 to June 25, 1994.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions today. The first one is from some 100 residents of the federal riding of Kamloops who have asked me to present this petition.

The petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

WITNESS PROTECTION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions signed by residents of my constituency, Scarborough West, the first of which deals with the issue of crime prevention and makes the suggestion that one way to help alleviate what seems to be a rash of crime is to protect witnesses who may have evidence that can lead to the apprehension and incarceration of criminals.

(1530)

In that regard they call upon Parliament to enact a witness protection bill. More specifically, they pray that Parliament enact Bill C-206, which happens to be my bill, at the earliest opportunity so as to provide a statutory foundation for a national witness relocation and protection program.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition signed by residents of my riding in which they pray and request that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the Human Rights Act to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

Some have said, incorrectly in my view, that this is a matter of human rights legislation but as we all know every person in Canada has the protection of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the rights stated in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms regardless of what they do or do not do in their bedrooms.

SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, my first petition concerns serial killer cards. One hundred and ten residents of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo have signed this petition. These petitioners feel that these cards glorify violence and show

disregard for the sanctity of human life and offer nothing positive for children and adults alike to admire.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is with regard to right to life. I have the honour to table a petition signed by over 260 petitioners from Cambridge.

The petitioners firmly believe in the sanctity of life and urge Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to those unborn children by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by living human beings to those who are not yet born.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, my last petition concerns human rights sexual orientation. Over 300 petitioners who have signed this petition in Cambridge pray and request that Parliament not amend the Human Rights Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate public approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality. I fully endorse and support those petitioners.

CANADA POST

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my honour to table two petitions from residents of my constituency of Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia.

The first one, signed by 89 residents of the rural districts of Rockglen and Vanguard, Saskatchewan, petitions the government to require Canada Post to rescind its proposed sevenfold increase in the cost of return postage on a book dispatched on interlibrary loan.

I concur with the petition, Mr. Speaker.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my second petition—and I think this about the eighth of this one I have presented in the House—is from people in the Coronach district of Saskatchewan.

It says whereas under section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada convicted murderers sentenced to life imprisonment without chance of parole for 25 years are able to apply for review after 15 years and where the murder of a Canadian citizen

Routine Proceedings

is a most reprehensible crime, therefore your petitioners request that Parliament repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

I also endorse this petition.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have 2,064 signatures on a petition asking the Parliament of Canada to prohibit and to continue to prohibit assisted suicide and to support the Criminal Code provisions prohibiting such activity which exists at the present time.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I also have petitions signed by 657 Canadians asking the Parliament of Canada for tougher sentences for youthful offenders.

(1535)

SERIAL KILLER BOARD GAME

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 1,698 Canadians who want to ban the product known as the serial killer board game.

This brings the number of signatures that I have tabled in this House to ask for a ban of the serial killer board game to a grand total of 111,638.

KILLER CARDS

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my constituents to amend the laws of Canada to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale or manufacture of killer cards and to advise the producers of killer cards that their product, if destined for Canada, will be seized and destroyed.

I believe that the commercialization and glorification of violence in our society should be abhorred by all.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Supply***MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall all notices of motions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b) because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 19 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

MAIN ESTIMATES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending June 23, 1994, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of a supply bill.

In view of recent practices do hon. members agree that the bill be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—PARLIAMENT

Hon. Marcel Massé (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved:

That Vote 1, in the amount of \$26,952,000 under the heading Parliament—The Senate—Program expenditures, in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995 (less the amount voted in Interim Supply), be concurred in.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to support the motion of the President of the Treasury Board that vote 1 in the amount of \$26,952,000 under the heading Parliament—The Senate be concurred in.

It would be appropriate for me, speaking on behalf of a government that is committed to fundamental institutional change and modernization designed to update our institutions for the economic and other problems at the end of the century and the beginning of the next, to comment on the role of the Senate as an institution in our governmental system. One of the first things to recognize is the antinomies presented by the Senate in its present operation.

On the one hand, and I quote from the beautiful wood carvings in the office of the president of the Senate from the Roman saga *Seneca*: “Nothing is well ordered that is hasty and precipitate”

which of course indicates attention to the conventional role that senators talk of themselves today, a House of sober second thought.

It is balanced by the quote from the great Roman tribune Cicero which translated says: “It is the duty of the nobles to oppose the fickleness of the multitudes”. Horace, who is a more popular poet, put it a little better when he said: “Odi profanum volgus et arceo!” I hate the profane mob, I keep aloof from them.

The Senate has always had this particular problem that you are exerting a power historically of correction and revision of a lower House that over the centuries had become increasingly more representative and fully democratized by the opening of the 20th century with the expansion of the franchise. Yet it is a House that over the centuries became increasingly more representative and fully democratized by the opening of the 20th century with the expansion of the franchise and yet the Senate has remained with a constitutional system that is wholly non-elective and that by the beginning of the 20th century had become anachronistic in historical terms. Indeed, the great House at Westminster, in light of which the Canadian Constitution Act in 1867 was framed and which members of this House refer to reverently and probably appropriately in that sense, abolished the powers of the House of Lords, the upper House, effectively in 1911.

(1540)

The Parliament Act of 1911 reduced the powers of the House of Lords to a suspensive veto of two years. This was in 1911. It was a reform measure introduced by a dynamic Liberal premier, Mr. Asquith, and his lieutenant, Lloyd George. It was changed after World War II by the Attlee government through reduction of the suspensive veto to three months.

There was a recognition that the principle of constitutional legitimacy which is one of the hallmarks of western and western derived constitutional democracy requires that large discretionary powers be based on an electoral mandate or some species of electoral confirmation.

So there is the dilemma for the Senate today, one which we have lived with for a considerable number of years and for which we have not as yet made the steps taken by the House at Westminster, the model for the Canadian Parliament.

I had the pleasure of addressing a seminar of eastern European parliamentarians who were here last week seeking advice from the Canadian Parliament, seeking to benefit from our experience. One of the Polish members of Parliament, a thoughtful gentleman who is also a professor of law at the University of Warsaw, said to me: “You have unconstitutional constitutional provisions in your constitution”. It sounds like an oxymoron and yet it is there. He said: “Look, I have read in the Constitution Act that to be a member of the Senate you have to have property worth \$4,000”. He said: “Is that democratic? It would not be constitutional in Poland”.

Supply

My friend, who is a senator and whom I respect was with me, explained that in 1867, \$4,000 was a fortune. You could buy a carriage with four horses and various other things. Today perhaps it buys several cups of coffee or more. The comparison was perhaps a little bit far-fetched but nevertheless the point was made to our Polish colleague. He said: "Nevertheless, it is not a healthy part of a constitutional charter to have this in. Why do you not get rid of it?" Then we had to get into the intricacies of how you change the Constitution of Canada since the time of the Constitution Act of 1982, which put us in a constitutional straitjacket in relation to direct constitutional amendment but which would leave, nevertheless, possibilities of change by more pragmatic and ingenious methods.

I would like to add something and I did this in conversation with a very thoughtful senator today. We were talking of unconstitutional constitutional norms which is a European concept really devised in the belief after World War II that there must be provisions on which you can challenge Nazi or communist constitutional provisions that are in denial of constitutional principles in the constitutional charter itself.

One of the points I raised with him, because he was approaching retiring age, was: "Do you think it is constitutional in Canadian terms to have mandatory retirement at the age of 75?" Of course the answer is that it is not. This would be another point to consider.

I would raise the basic point whether a non-elected House today is constitutionally legitimate and therefore constitutional in the large sense. Obviously I am not suggesting that we rush out to the Supreme Court to obtain a declaratory judgment or advisory opinion on this point, although I do think that the most recent ruling in 1979 by the Supreme Court of Canada on reform touching the Senate was somewhat wide of the mark even then.

(1545)

Today, granted changing public opinion controls so much in public law and the evolution of the public conscience which affects the content of constitutional norms, I would wonder whether that 1979 decision is not worth re-examining. Nevertheless in the context of the Senate today, and granted the difficulties of amending the Constitution by the front door methods the Trudeau patriation project introduced—we do have to face this issue—is the fact that we have a non-elected second chamber, part of the widespread public disaffection with constitutional institutions and processes today. I think the answer is yes.

What can we and the Senate collectively do with this? By the way, one of the suggestions I have always considered is that the courts should be used more fully. Could a constitutional ruling be obtained and, following the example of litigants in far-reaching constitutional matters of this sort before the United States Supreme Court, could one not ask the court to delay application of any ruling for enough time to allow a corrective constitutional amendment or other change to be made?

Let me, however, return to the more practical and immediate issues that could control our approach to the Senate. The Senate can be changed without its own assent. This is one of the changes made by the Trudeau constitutional patriation act of 1982, the Constitutional Act, 1982. Only a certain time delay is involved.

There are areas in which change could be made without necessarily involving the provinces constitutionally and therefore touching the power of the federal Parliament alone, which then would require the Senate's assent or delay.

I hasten to say that I advanced some of these propositions in evidence as an invited expert witness before the Senate and the House in previous years. I have said in other committees on which I saw one of my learned colleagues opposite, a pox on expert witnesses or self-styled expert witnesses. I have to say with all humility that when I have been summoned as an expert witness by the Goldenberg committee, an excellent committee of the Senate, and by the Molgat-MacGuigan committee and others I offered these suggestions with all modesty.

One of the issues would be whether the Senate would not better assume a role, as the United States Senate has, in confirmation or review of executive power rather than in review of legislative power in which its lack of legitimacy through direct election limits it. The public appointing processes in the United States are subject to Senate confirmation, as to the Supreme Court, ambassadorial appointments and what we would here call crown corporations. This is an important and democratic role in the United States and one that ensures the better functioning of the public services.

The Senate role in foreign affairs, the two-thirds Senate majority necessary to confirm a treaty made by the United States, gives a role for a body removed at once from the executive power making the treaties and from a house often subject to too much sectional pressure.

These are the sorts of powers one proposed to the Goldenberg committee, to the Molgat-MacGuigan committee and to others under condition that the Senate be reformed and be elected.

One further role would be the election of the head of state, the Governor General. There is a case to be made for this and for providing a further constitutional legitimacy for that office. Once again this is a condition precedent. A condition precedent would be electing the Senate or in some way legitimating it by some other process.

In western Canada there is a strong body of opinion associated with a former Social Credit minister, Rafe Mair, known for broadcasting and other activities, that the Senate should be a states house, very much like the German Bundesrat. The Bundesrat is really a body for federal-provincial co-operation in the practical administration and application of legislation. It is not really a second chamber in the North American or British sense. It is an interesting model.

Supply

(1550)

I raise these areas in which change in Senate powers, new powers, could be introduced and provide a worthwhile and valuable role, a necessary countervailing power granting conditions at the end of the century to an executive power that many feel has become presidential and therefore without the checks and balances however applied to presidential power in the United States and some other countries.

How would we change the Senate? Granted there are the difficulties of amending it and expecting that we are not going to have a fundamental act of constituent power that usually occurs only after revolutions or great military victories in other countries. Certainly some changes could be made by convention, by custom.

The Government of Alberta proceeded to elect somebody whom it designated as a candidate for appointment to the Senate. In one case the Prime Minister of Canada accepted that advice and appointed the person so elected. If that were followed it could create a general practice.

More interestingly, the Mulroney government, after the failure of the Meech Lake accord, proceeded to name four Quebec senators following the procedures outlined in the Meech Lake accord of consultation with the provincial attorney general and premier. Some would say that those are better Quebec senators than the usual type of nomination; interesting persons in any case.

In the meantime, though, the Senate itself can exercise self-restraint in its powers. Again to quote our Latin scholars, it probably would better to use the Fabian tactic of delay and conciliation without it trying directly to defeat measures.

I say this in welcoming the role of the Senate, a discreet role in relation to Bill C-18. I am not speaking of the confrontation with the House which I think would be unacceptable according to my constitutional thinking, but of the quiet conversations by individual senators with members of the House that seem to have produced a felicitous accord between the two Houses—maybe I am being premature—as to whether and how Bill C-18 should be adopted in its revised form.

This sort of process of interaction between two houses, a dialectical process, is very much in accord with the evolution of democratic constitutionalism. It produces a sensible and pragmatic approach to revising, updating and modernizing an institution that was honoured in its origins but has failed to keep pace with the changes in Canadian society, with the views on political representation and political constitutional legitimacy flowing from that and with the changes in other countries.

I commend to members, in voting on this measure which has my full support, that we keep in mind an agenda for constitutional change involving the upper house; that we keep in mind that the constitution is not simply an issue of the place of one or more provinces in Confederation, renewed or otherwise, but that there are larger issues involving the relationship between the citizen and the state; that we keep in mind that there are better functioning and more modern institutions that correspond more exactly to the main trends in democratic constitutionalism. This sort of change would do much to restore public confidence in our parliamentary institutions and in the people who serve them.

On this basis I am happy to support the motion as introduced.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what was said by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, and I would appreciate his comments on the Legislative Council of what was then known as the Legislative Assembly in Quebec City. In 1967, Premier Daniel Johnson senior abolished the Legislative Council. Well, you know how these things work. There was the usual wheeling and dealing, and finally the councillors agreed to be voted out of existence.

(1555)

I would also like to recall for the benefit of the hon. member and this is another point, that I used to live in one of seven so-called protected ridings in Quebec.

An hon. member: Protected under the Constitution.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Yes, under the Constitution. I lived in Wolfe, where there were about 6,000 voters at the time, compared with nearly 100,000 in Westmount. There were six or seven protected ridings, and to revoke their protected status required a unanimous resolution of the Quebec National Assembly. So the members for these ridings agreed to vote their ridings out of existence and themselves out of a job. Of course, a number of mutually acceptable arrangements were made.

I think that is the price we have to pay, because after going back in time several hundred years during the very interesting overview the hon. member gave us earlier, when we get back to the situation today in 1994, and soon in 2000, well, the Senate—In any case, when I mention the Senate in Frontenac, people tend to laugh. I will not repeat everything they said, but they do not take the Senate very seriously.

Supply

I would appreciate hearing the views of the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and I will make the following comment.

I regret that it is almost impossible to change the Constitution directly with a law, as far as the Senate is concerned. If it is possible, we can consider it, but it will take the senators' consent.

But without changing the role of Parliament, of the elected House, I do not think that we can simply abolish the Senate. Legislative committees absolutely must have an increased role and the House must have a much more sophisticated system than the Constitutional checks and balances than what we now have.

As for Senate reform, in the 1980s, we considered the possibility of a sort of Constitutional counterweight, a body that would oversee executive decisions, confirm appointments, review treaties and international agreements, things like that. We are faced with this dilemma that it is almost impossible to abolish the Senate without its consent, except as far as details and particular powers of the Senate are concerned.

I agree that we must work with the Senate and try to obtain their co-operation. If not, I am quite prepared to accept an increased role for legislative committees and even to consider the possibility of an advisory opinion from the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I too listened closely and with a great deal of interest to the speech given by our colleague from Vancouver Quadra who is an expert in constitutional matters.

(1600)

The Senate is, by definition, the chamber which represents the interests of the provinces. Now is not the time to debate how well it actually does this job, but the fact remains that this is one of its many duties, namely to counterbalance the representation by population in the House of Commons.

In light of these considerations, does the hon. member not consider it highly unusual, as I do, that a party which claims to have provincial interests at heart all of a sudden attempts in this federal chamber to abolish a mechanism which belongs to the provinces, without even bothering to consult them, and what is more, attempts to do so by cutting this institution's budget? Does he not find this the least bit odd? I do. The member opposite claims that Canadians do not really care all that much about the Senate.

If my colleague from Vancouver Quadra will recall the Charlottetown constitutional debate, he will remember that the Senate did indeed matter. Once the debate had begun, the people argued over whether their province should have one more senator, or one less. Would he not agree that the Senate seemed to matter then, that Canadians should at the very least be consulted before the Senate is abolished and that such a decision should not be made if that is not what the provinces or the Canadian people want?

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. It is important to recognize the distinction made by the renowned Austro-Hungarian jurist by the name of Ehrlich between written law and the actual practice of law. I cannot consider the Senate as it is today as representing the provinces, unless major changes are made to its make-up. You cannot really say that the Senate represents the provinces.

Under these circumstances, it is very important to change the representation system applied to the Senate so that it can play the role it was originally set up for, but which does not reflect the social reality in Canada any more. That is why I would be tempted to make these changes, even though I am not very optimistic.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Richmond—Wolfe and on behalf of my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and of all the people we represent in the House of Commons, I will speak to the notice I gave to this House objecting, on behalf of the Official Opposition, to the vote in the amount of \$26,952,000 under the heading Parliament—The Senate.

The Bloc has always spoken out against the existence of a Senate, and I would like to demonstrate that this institution is, in our opinion, as archaic as it is useless. This institution is nothing more than an excuse for the government to reward its friends, be they Liberal or Tory, who will then work—in true partisan fashion—for the government or for the interests they represent. Several of my colleagues will prove it in several ways during this debate.

I listened to the speech made by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra and I will go over the issues he dealt with. He will probably not like my arguments. I note at the outset that the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra must be feeling lonely because, first of all, he looked at the issue of maintaining the votes through the objective of revamping and improving the Senate. He must be feeling lonely because, first, his own leader does not want to address in any way the constitutional issue and, second, the Senate itself would have to scuttle its own ship.

Supply

(1605)

I would like to remind you that the current distribution of the 104 Senate seats is provided for in Section 22 of the 1867 Constitution Act. As Canada is divided into four regions, these regions must be equally represented. Ontario and Quebec get 24 senators each; New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, six each; Prince Edward Island, four; the four Western provinces, six each for a total of 24; in 1948, Newfoundland got six; finally, the two territories have one each.

Senators are appointed by the Governor General who, according to tradition, acts on the initiative and advice of the Prime Minister. Everyone recognizes that they are in fact appointed by the Prime Minister.

Since senators are not elected, and the hon. member directly alluded to that fact, the Bloc Québécois feels that the other place is an anachronism, as the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra put it so well, given the modern criteria which underly the political management of a State.

So, on behalf of my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, I denounce this unacceptable waste in the form of a credit of \$26.9 million, plus statutory expenditures of some \$15.7 million, for a total budget of \$42.6 million, not including the services provided. This is an unacceptable expenditure for an archaic political institution which plays a useless role for Quebecers and Canadians at large.

Let me remind you of the origin of senates in the various political systems, and of the objectives of the Canadian Senate when it was created. This will give you a better idea of how that institution is a miserable failure in the Canadian political system.

Let us take a look at history. In ancient Greece, more than 500 years before Christ, the legislators formed a council of the 500, whose role was to control the possible excesses of democracy. The very ancient societies had the wisdom to create a political body to monitor decisions concerning society as a whole. The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra alluded to this earlier. On one of the walls of the Canadian Senate, there is a maxim by Cicero, who was a thinker in Ancient Rome, to the effect that it is the duty of the noble to oppose the instability of the people. How pretentious!

From time immemorial, when democracy was still in its infancy, people sought to give an aura of wisdom to the Senate, in order to legitimize this institution, whose mission is fundamentally a conservative one for society.

The Senate is like the British House of Lords; it is a House for very important people. True to the British tradition, the accent is on sharing legislative power among the two Houses, which represent two different social classes, that is the people and the nobility.

The first objective of the Senate, like its British model, is to review and think, thus monitoring the House of Commons. This is very close to the perception that prevailed in antiquity. Senate members are supposed to counterbalance the executive side of Parliament. Moreover, the Fathers of Confederation also wanted to follow the American model and created a Canadian Senate similar to a federal Chamber whose objective was to protect the rights of the regions and provinces, and to ensure its participation in the legislative process of the Federation.

The founders of the Canadian Upper House took their inspiration both from the British House of Lords and the American Senate, two models that were clearly incompatible and light years away from any historical affinity. The House of Lords, anchored in the medieval myth of the monarchy, and the Senate, with its modern North American dynamics firmly anchored in the twentieth century. This was a highly unsuitable marriage between a modern American Senate and a medieval British system.

We must not forget that the criteria for representation from Quebec and Ontario, at the time the Canadian Constitution was drafted, were included at the behest of Lower Canada—in other words, Quebec—in exchange for agreeing with the principle of proportional representation in the House of Commons.

(1610)

In the minds of the founding fathers, the Senate was intended to provide equitable representation for the regions. However, it was never intended as a house of the regions. Today, there is no reason why the House of Commons should appropriate funds to a political institution that is ineffective and totally useless.

Considering the state of the economy, with a debt of over \$550 billion and unemployment and poverty in Quebec and Canada, the total budget of \$42.6 million allocated to this institution would be better spent on economic recovery and job creation.

To continue this discourse on the failure of successive federal governments to provide for responsible management of public funds, as they sank millions into an institution that is utterly useless, I would like to give two examples of a functional Senate; the U.S. Senate and the German Bundesrat referred to by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

Unlike the Canadian Senate, the American model—the first federal model on this continent—is unique in its simplicity. In the House of Representatives, representation is based on numbers, while in the Senate, it is based on absolute equality among the States.

A description of the duties of U.S. senators demonstrates how ineffective and useless members of the Canadian Upper House really are. Here is why American senators have specific legislative duties that are essential to the proper functioning of the American presidential system. Thus, in conjunction with the House of Representatives, they pass bills previously approved by the President. If no compromise can be reached, the bill is not passed. They also have executive functions whose importance is

still growing, such as the approval of appointments made by the President, appointments of judges, ministers and ambassadors which are often subjected to rigorous inquiries by the U.S. Senate.

Ratification of international treaties is another major executive power held by the Senate within the American system. The American presidential system is efficient in that, among other things, the Senate produces prestigious members well known for their legislative skills, and let me remind you that they are elected by the people, which is not the case in Canada. They are elected by the people.

The U.S. Senate alone has attracted the most talented minds of the nation and constitutes an intellectual centre of indisputable superiority compared with the legislative dynamics of the Canadian Senate.

The United States Senate has really brought to the fore, through a real and constant practice of politics, the spirit of wisdom and reason which inspired people from antiquity when they set up the early senates.

Let us talk about the Bundesrat. As for the German Bundesrat, or Federal Council, it is another Senate-like democratic institution, but contrary to the Canadian Senate, it works. The Bundesrat, which was created by the Constitution of the German Empire in 1871, was a major legislative body of the Empire. It was originally an assembly of ambassadors from member states. It is the ancestor of the second German House, the Assembly of the Landers' Executive members or, if you prefer, of the federated provinces representing the various territories, either provinces or regions.

Simply to explain how the Bundesrat works, it is formed by 45 members of the government of Landers and each Land is allowed at least three votes. To illustrate the process, when a bill is introduced, for instance, it must be submitted to the approval of the Bundesrat, the equivalent to our Senate, which has a veto it can use within one week, provided there is a majority of two thirds of the votes. The head of the government of a Land automatically becomes a member of the Bundesrat. The central government designates as many ministers as the number of votes the Lands are entitled to.

I should add that the approval of the Bundesrat is required when an issue deals with administrative or financial interests of the Landers, the equivalent of the provinces and regions in Canada.

(1615)

In Germany, federalism finds its true meaning. Eleven Landers are directly represented by the members of each Land's government. Therefore, Canadian federalists cannot decently

Supply

talk in Quebec or elsewhere of the merits of a viable federalism that does not even respect its own components. Federalism has never existed in Canada. There is a central government that tried by all means to grab as much power as possible at the expense of provinces and regions. The Canadian Senate plays no significant role in the defence of regions and minorities, one of the reasons why it was created, which leaves the Executive of the House of Commons a maximum of powers.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): We must admit it is not easy to deal with two legislative houses in a British type of parliamentary system. Parliamentary systems, clearly dominated by the executive, give their Upper House very limited if not meaningless powers. Given that such is the system in Canada, the Senate is reduced to an anachronism since it has no weight in the country's political balance and lacks legitimacy because its members are not elected but simply appointed by the Prime Minister. Since the executive is accountable only to the House of Commons, the Senate loses any influence it might have over the government. The parliamentary system requires that the Lower House have greater powers than the Upper House because the government comes from the former and is elected and, therefore, is accountable only to it.

That problem does not exist within a presidential system like the one in the United States since the executive is politically accountable neither to the House of Representatives nor to the Senate. The separation of powers is more strictly established in a presidential system than in a parliamentary system like ours where the Senate is useless.

In the third part of this demonstration, I would like to touch on the question of administrative responsibilities associated with the allocation of \$26.9 million for the operation of an Upper House within the Canadian parliamentary system and, with your permission, I will explain how the Canadian Senate is unable to accomplish various tasks which, in theory, are part of its obligations.

For example, it is difficult to justify the existence of an Upper House based on the principle of legislative review. The idea that the Canadian Senate could reflect soberly on the legislative measures of the House of Commons flows from the conservative prejudices that existed earlier under the monarchy. The Canadian Senate is a remnant of a traditional and elitist representation opposed, in a way, to the monopolistic embodiment of a democratic legitimacy already more than 200 years old in the western world. The Canadian Upper House, the Senate, accepts its secondary role by undertaking activities that have nothing to do with its legislative role. In fact, senators are named by the

Supply

Prime Minister to play a partisan role, red or blue, or to represent pressure groups. What they do is lobby.

Here is the truth: Over the last 50 years, the Senate used its veto power only to delay, as was pointed out by my friend, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra. Between 1943 and 1964, only two bills were rejected by the Senate and since 1964, only one, and under circumstances which were not really significant, considering that on the rejected bill, C-43 about abortion, MPs and senators were free to vote according to their conscience. Before the Constitution Act of 1982, the Senate always bowed to the desires of the government and the Commons. It did not exercise its veto power because it was continuously controlled by the party in power.

When the Canadian Senate was created, the idea was to enable the senators to distance themselves from the partisan positions taken by the members of the House of Commons. The idea was to have a House of sober second thought which would be above the bursts of passion of the people.

(1620)

In Canada, the Fathers of Confederation were in favour of nominating senators to preserve the independence of the members of the Upper House. One could have expected that senators, who hold office until they turn 75—quite the job security at a time when unemployment rate is so high, both in Canada and Quebec—and are not subject to the whims of the people, would have shown their independence towards the party in office.

On the contrary, the Upper House members have been staunchly partisan, with little regard for their role as impartial law-makers. It needs to be stated again, senators are appointed on a strictly partisan basis.

For the Bloc Québécois, which is concerned not only with Quebec's interests, but also with the democratic values dear to all Canadians, the contradiction between the myth of a House of sober second thought and the reality of a partisan Canadian Senate, is reason enough to oppose any kind of subsidy for this useless institution and to advocate its abolition.

Some hon. members: What a waste!

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): The principle of equal regional representation has become increasingly more tenuous as the regions have evolved, as the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell mentioned in his question. I submit that the original regional distribution, which dates back to the negotiations surrounding the 1867 Constitution Act, is no longer representative of today's population nor of present regional borders. Fortunately, provincial assemblies quickly took over the Senate's role regarding representation of regional interests.

Finally, we must mention the dismal failure of the Canadian Senate as the protector of minorities. One of the Upper House's important roles, which is enshrined in this country's Constitution, is not only provincial or regional representation, but also the representation and protection of interests less well protected by the House of Commons.

Since linguistic duality, the notion of two founding nations, is a fundamental characteristic of Canada, such duality should normally be manifested in the Senate and be a fundamental element of its make-up. I am referring here to the double-majority mechanism, which ensures a more adequate protection for French-speaking minorities outside Quebec.

But, never ever has the Upper House stood up for these minorities' interests, and this is a proven fact. Take, for example, the problems encountered by all French-speaking communities in Canada, and that was evidenced again today. The Senate's action in all its spheres of activity fails miserably.

In fact, Canada's Upper House has a very clearly defined mandate, which is to represent partisan interests, Tories or Grits. A majority of the senators appointed by the Prime Minister have some political experience, in fact approximately half of them, and the others usually have rendered well-recognized services to the party in power. The Senate does allow a golden retirement for politicians and others who are long-time supporters of Liberal and Conservative members and who have always been close to the corridors of power in Canada.

From 1925 to 1963, the average age of senators was 69. In 1975, it was 64 years. A seat in the Senate is a true reward at career's end, since one does not have to fight anymore to keep one's seat until the age of 75. For the government, it is both a reward and a way to control its institution.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I agree with some of the hon. member's comments but certainly not with all of them. First, the hon. member claims to be the champion of regions in Canada. He said a few moments ago that his party and himself are protecting the interests—these are his exact words—the interests of Quebec and those of the other provinces.

(1625)

Should he be reminded that the premier of Alberta, for example, wants the Senate not only to be maintained but to be even more powerful? How can the hon. member suggest abolishing an institution which some premiers want not only to keep but to strengthen?

Second, as for the French-speaking senators from outside Quebec, well, the hon. member does not seem to be very well informed. At this very moment, Senator Eymard Corbin is on the official languages committee, defending the interests of francophones outside Quebec. It is not the first time that Senator Corbin has defended the interests of French-speaking mino-

rities. Furthermore, he is a former chairman of the Assemblée internationale des parlementaires de langue française and he played many other roles.

The hon. member opposite may not have been here for long, but he should take a little look at the background of our French-speaking parliamentarians from outside Quebec. The late Senator Bélisle was Mayor of Sudbury and a minister in the Ontario Legislature before being called to the Senate. Did the hon. member forget the history of Senator Bélisle, one of the two francophones outside Quebec to have been in municipal, provincial and federal government? The other one is me.

An hon. member: At the same time?

Mr. Boudria: No. Not at the same time.

Third, he said that the senators were almost all appointed to their position as a political reward. Does he forget the work done by Senator Beaudoin, a constitutional expert who was not appointed to represent my party or his own? Senator Beaudoin speaks in defence of francophone minorities.

Surely the hon. member opposite should apologize to those three parliamentarians I just mentioned.

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell will certainly not succeed in making me cry.

In response to a comment that the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell made earlier, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra told him that provincial representation in the Senate simply does not exist. So, you can just forget about regional representation.

Second, I will tell my colleague that his party is in a catch-22 situation. The Liberals are defending the allocation of funds to a Senate which, according to the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, must be reformed and improved. My colleague does not realize that, to do so, we have to amend the Constitution, and it so happens that his own leader has said clearly that amendments to the Constitution were absolutely out of the question. Do these people talk to each other sometimes? It seems that they do not talk to each other at all.

Does the hon. member not hear what his leader says here in the House? Each time he is asked a question about constitutional matters, the Prime Minister says that he does not want to talk about the Constitution. Yet, the argument invoked by the hon. member to defend the allocation of funds to the Senate is that we must improve the Senate, change the name of the game, and so on. Such comments cannot be serious.

We know full well that the Senate has no power. Senators are appointed by the Prime Minister and they have a particular job to do, a job that is partisan in nature. Everybody knows that. The Senate costs a fortune to administer, more than \$42 million to be exact, and yet, as mentioned by the Auditor General in his last report, it sits only a little over 40 days a year, with absenteeism running at between 20 and 25 per cent. It is ridiculous to invest

Supply

millions of dollars in such a useless institution when there are so many unemployed and so many people on welfare in Quebec and across Canada.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe.

He has pointed out the constitutional contradictions in our era of transition. He has quoted two models, but they are completely divergent. The American model is not a House of sober second thought, like the one in Westminster. He admitted that. It operates equally as a House of sober second thought and as a body working as a constitutional check and balance vis-à-vis the executive power. In comparison, the German Bundesrat is certainly not a House of sober second thought. It is essentially an intergovernmental committee of high-ranking officials.

(1630)

Is he then advocating one or the other as a model, for example, for a revision of the Canadian constitution?

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): I thank the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra for his question. We have frequent discussions in committee. I know that he is very learned and that he has great concern for democracy and parliamentary institutions.

The hon. member noticed that I made reference to two different systems in my remarks. I meant to compare our Canadian Senate, which is completely ineffective, with two different models that do work, each in its own way. They get things done, they wield some power, and play specific roles. My colleague had mentioned a few models, and I just added a few more.

Our fundamental goal is always to increase the powers and the role of members in this House so that they can really begin to carry out their duties as soon as they are elected and do so completely.

I do not advocate any model for the Senate. What we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is examining an ineffective institution, and pointing out that this government does not want to change the rules because it refuses to reopen the Constitution. It does not want to hear a single word about the Constitution, even though some of its members would like to bring about improvements and propose amendments.

I do not advocate any specific model. All I said is that the Senate just does not work, and that it does not need that much money.

[English]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in response to the Bloc motion. I am happy to stand before the House and say that I and the Reform Party certainly oppose the Bloc motion. We believe the intent of this motion obviously is to eliminate spending on the Senate and thereby achieve the de facto abolishment of it. The

Supply

Reform Party is and always has been an advocate of a reformed Senate, certainly not of its abolishment.

In large countries where the population is unevenly distributed there is a fundamental need to balance representation by population with representation by province. This is especially true in a parliamentary system like Canada's where regimented party caucuses engage in bloc voting under the direction of party leadership. In other big federations like the United States and Australia this balance has been achieved by establishing two levels of government and a bicameral legislature in which the provinces are effectively represented in the upper House and representation by population prevails in the lower House.

The Fathers of Confederation intended to provide this type of balance in the Canadian Parliament, but the Senate as currently constituted has failed to play this role and it simply needs to be reformed.

First, the Senate must be popularly elected. In a democratic age an appointed upper House will always lack legitimacy and hence political power. It is time to take democracy seriously.

Second, the Senate must be equal, in the sense that each province must have the same number of seats, such as in the Australian and United States models. In such a Senate the thinly populated areas, provinces of Canada, would have a majority of seats in the Senate, just as the heavily populated provinces hold the majority of seats in this House of Commons.

Reformers will not be misled into supporting a counterfeit regional version of equality according to which the west, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada will each have the same number of senators. This is approximately what Canada has now and it simply does not work.

Third, the Senate must be effective. It must have adequate power to balance the House of Commons. There is some room for fine tuning here. Reformers do not believe that the defeat of a government bill in the Senate should lead to the defeat of the government. However, the Senate must not be shorn of power so that it becomes unable to amend or veto regionally offensive legislation emanating from the House of Commons.

(1635)

Reformers believe that only a triple-E Senate, elected, equal, and effective, can balance the interests of less populous provinces with those of the more populous provinces in this Canadian Parliament.

When I talk about regional fairness I like to relate it to some of the things I have been involved with, one of which is my work on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food.

Certainly we live in a country with diverse interests and diverse problems and certainly agriculture is no exception to that.

Recently Reformers proposed at the committee level a 5 per cent reduction in the overhead costs of the Department of Agriculture. The reason we proposed this was that we believed there was a need for cuts in the department other than those which would come on the backs of farmers or the people who work in that area. I relate this to the regional fairness issue because with the diverse differences in this country only regional fairness and equality in an elected Senate would compensate for those differences.

The Reform Party made the first step toward a triple-E Senate when it pressured the Government of Alberta into holding properly constituted Senate elections in 1988. Most recently the Reform Party asked the Alberta government to pass a resolution which would request the current appointed senators in Alberta to resign so that sanctioned elections could be held in conjunction with the next Alberta provincial election. The Reform Party would herald the accomplishment of Senate election for all senators, both inside Alberta and throughout Canada as a significant leap toward the goal of a triple-E Senate.

There have been many reasons, many arguments, many pressures by politicians and people of all stripes for the abolition of the Senate. The Reform Party favours and has been advocating for many years now the abolition of those features of the Canadian Senate which render it useless and repugnant to voters and taxpayers, namely: Abolish the patronage appointments to the Senate. Elect all senators. Abolish exorbitant perks, pensions and privileges. Establish an independent commission to recommend a pay and pension package for senators and members of Parliament comparable to what is available in the private sector. Abolish inequitable representation in the Senate. Elect equal numbers of senators from each province.

If the Senate is abolished completely, Canada will immediately be governed by a one House Parliament in which the heavily populated centres would have an absolute majority of seats. In such a Parliament it would be virtually impossible to secure effective representation of the interests of the thinly populated parts of the country, namely the west, the north, Atlantic Canada, northern and rural Ontario, and northern and rural Quebec.

The members of the current House of Commons who are suddenly advocating Senate abolition have no interest in establishing any checks and balances on themselves, in particular the regional checks and balances which a reformed Senate would provide. They are simply seeking to consolidate power in their own hands.

If the Senate is completely abolished it is also highly unlikely it would be replaced in the foreseeable future. The premiers who are most loudly advocating Senate abolition simply want to maintain their own monopoly on representing their provincial

interests rather than sharing their responsibility with a reformed Senate.

If the Senate is simply abolished therefore there is very little likelihood a reformed Senate would ever be established. The Canadian federal system would fail to balance representation by population with representation by province, an essential characteristic for any federal system, particularly in a large country with an unevenly distributed population.

It is therefore the position of the Reform Party that the useless and offensive features of the current Senate should be and must be abolished and that an elected, equal and effective Senate created in its place.

(1640)

In the short term, representatives of an elected body would be more responsive to the desires of the provinces of Canada and it would not require a constitutional fight to accomplish the changes we are suggesting.

In the longer term, Canadians should continue to demand an effective regional federal body to ensure that all Canadians are adequately represented in the Canadian Parliament. The long range interest of Canadian federalism, Senate reform, must be put ahead of the short term expediency of Senate abolition.

As has been mentioned by many members today, we talk a lot about drastic changes in the way this place and the entire federal system operate. Certainly we have been talking about fiscal responsibility, getting government spending under control and cutting government spending.

There are two ways to look at this. One is to cut federal spending; the other way is to prioritize federal spending. We want to take the approach of prioritizing federal spending and we talk about that in many areas and in many programs. Certainly the Senate must be one of them. We must prioritize our spending. If an elected, effective and equal Senate is a priority as we believe it is, then we must use those funds in our Senate and make cuts where there is excess in programs or non-productive programs.

I look forward to questions and comments from hon. members. I appreciate very much having had this opportunity to speak on this subject.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, let us say that, for only a few minutes, I agree with my colleague and that I support the Senate. It is only for a few minutes, because I do not really agree with him, but it is a figure of speech. I would like to ask my colleague, since the Senate is so important, if he can say who is the senator representing his region.

Supply

I would also like to ask him, in the case of an elected Senate such as the one proposed by his party, the triple-E Senate, which House would make the final decision on passing bills? Would it be the elected House of Commons or the elected Senate? Let us take, for example, a bill on the right to abortion.

My last question is: does he believe that having bills passed by only one House in his province is wrong or harmful?

[*English*]

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's first question about who would make the final decision on a bill, it really is a very simple process, almost too simple to believe it could work. Many times in the past ordinary rank and file Canadians have had ideas that seem too simple to work, yet they do.

When talking about where the final responsibility would be for a bill, what would happen under a triple-E Senate would be as is the normal process in the House. We would vote on and pass a bill, send it to the other place and the Senate would then have the opportunity to either accept or defeat it and send it back.

The other part of the solution is that the defeat of a government motion or bill would not necessarily bring down the government. That is the safeguard in sending a bill back from Senate which was not passed in the Senate. The bill would come back to this House, we would deal with it again, make it better and make it acceptable to the Senate. The process would work very well.

As far as the second part of the member's question about one House by itself in a province, I assume he means Saskatchewan. Certainly on a provincial level it is an entirely different issue, or at least it is in my province which is thinly populated, with fewer than a million people. There is no need for an upper and lower house in that type of process. Certainly in a Canadian-wide process where there are 10 provinces, much diversity and many different areas, there is certainly a need for an effective Senate.

(1645)

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I listened with enthusiasm to the member opposite with regard to his presentation. However, I find that having been here the same length of time that he has we must be attending different meetings of this House.

As I remember we have had some free votes. I think the member opposite was likely here when we voted on Bosnia. We have had other discussions that are going to lend to free votes. Yet there seems to be the impression that the 35th Parliament is not going to provide that mechanism.

I would like to know from the member opposite if he was in attendance. Has he seen that happen? Is he aware of the fact that

Supply

yes we have changed in this House? I feel the operation of the other place is likely going to change as well.

I would like to know from him what his feelings are with regard to this whole implementation of the 35th Parliament and the voting procedure and free votes that will come forward.

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments and his questions. I think they are valid comments. Certainly there has been significant change in this House. I believe there could in fact be significant change in the other place.

I have to agree however with some of my colleagues from the opposition party when they talk about a policy and the Senate. I believe and we believe that we have to abolish some aspects of the Senate such as the appointments, the perks, the pay and pensions and those types of things.

Yes I was in attendance for the free vote the member speaks of. I congratulate the government for those types of initiatives. I think that is long overdue in this country. I do applaud that.

I look forward to more of those same types of things. If we openly look at the Senate, how it is created, what the process is and how it works I really do not see any other answer other than to make the thing effective. That is the only hope I see for thinly populated areas of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party member who just spoke about the Senate expressed very interesting views. His determination to stand up for the regions was one aspect of his speech that I found particularly striking.

I have here the list of Quebec senators with their mailing address. At the moment, Quebec is lucky enough to have 21 senators. Being myself a representative of a large riding far from the big urban centres, I insist on the rights of regions. If really the Senate is that important, our regions—Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the North Shore, the Gaspé Peninsula—should also have a senator to represent them adequately. According to this list, of these 21 senators, 13 are from the Montreal area. There is one whose address is Laval-sur-le-Lac. I wonder if he would not also be from the Montreal area.

An hon. member: That is in the Montreal area.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): I am told it is in the Montreal area. In Quebec, 14 senators represent the Montreal region. Is this a good regional representation?

Could the member tell us if, in his home province, regions are well represented in the Senate? I can tell him that in Quebec, I seriously question the value of the Senate as champion of the regions. I think it is not very effective, on that score.

[English]

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, I really do appreciate this question and comment from the hon. member. In fact he makes my case exactly. I would rest my case saying that has been the problem with the Senate. There is very unequal representation.

Fortunately for the member there are 21 senators from Quebec. We do not have that luxury in Saskatchewan simply because we are a thinly populated area.

(1650)

Having said that, I also believe that an equal number of senators for each province will rectify that problem. Certainly the member will know that if there were to be two to four senators from his province that he should have equal or good representation, the same number as Ontario, Saskatchewan or any other province would have.

I understand the problem with the regional unfairness and the regional representation that is currently not happening.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to advise the House that as of now, the official opposition will be splitting its time into ten-minute, rather than twenty-minute periods.

I would like to begin my presentation by recounting an anecdote which, to my mind, clearly reflects Quebecers' feelings about the Senate, because it is a fact that virtually the entire population favours and indeed has long been advocating the abolition of the Senate.

This anecdote involves the one-time Quebec legislative council which my colleague from Frontenac referred to moments ago and which was abolished in the late 1960s. However, while the council still existed, more specifically during the 1950s, Maurice Duplessis who was then premier appointed Mr. Patrice Tardif, a member of the legislative council, to the Senate.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): From Saint-Méthode-de-Frontenac.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Tardif, who represented the riding of Frontenac at the time in the National Assembly, or as it was known, the legislative assembly, had a rather unusual way of talking in that he pronounced the letter s like a z. One day, several months after his appointment, he encountered Premier Duplessis in the halls of the Quebec parliament.

Mr. Tardif asked the Premier what the people were saying about his appointment. The Premier answered in French "Ils ne disent rien, Patrice, ils rizent."

This answer speaks volume about the way Quebecers felt at the time about the Upper House. I think we can safely say that in 1994, their opinion has not changed.

Supply

On a more serious note, I would like to use my few remaining minutes to speak about the effectiveness of the Senate, commonly referred to as the Upper House. When our colleagues in the Reform Party talk about the importance of a Triple E Senate, I would simply say to them, with all due respect, that to my mind, we already have a Triple E Senate, a Senate with zero effectiveness, zero efficiency and zero elected members.

In fact, we could even qualify the current Senate not as a Triple E Senate, but instead as a Triple I Senate, the I standing for ineffective, inefficient and inane. You may tell me, Mr. Speaker, that I am the only one who thinks this way.

(1655)

You may think that the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead is too harsh on the Senate. For the benefit of all my colleagues, I will refer to the report of the Auditor General, who is a serious and reputable man whose competence is recognized by all members of this House. The situation has not changed since he wrote his March 1991 report.

This is what he wrote: “The Senate is unique and operates in a rapidly changing environment. Managing the Senate is different from managing a department, a public organization or a private business. As a legislative body, the Senate can establish and adopt most of the regulations impacting on its conduct. It is not necessarily subjected to the same laws as the administration. It may not even be bound by the Financial Administration Act. The usual accountability mechanisms therefore do not apply. Without these mechanisms or appropriate alternatives, the Senate, just like the population, cannot be as certain as most other institutions that its administration is sufficiently concerned with economy and efficiency”. That is what the Auditor General said in his report tabled in this House in March 1991.

He goes on to say: “A distinctive feature of Senate administration is that senators are collectively responsible. Senators are themselves responsible for their own administration. They are accountable only to themselves”. He adds: “We noted that the Senate did not, either officially or unofficially, delegate clear responsibilities to the administration or clearly indicate what the administration was accountable for”. In other words, the administration of that chamber resembles a free-for-all. They do what they want with public money, as the Auditor General pointed out.

He goes on to say: “The Senate does not report adequately on its administrative and financial record and its management of human resources. It does not have sufficient information to do so systematically. As far as senators’ expenditures are concerned, we noted that the amounts declared in public accounts were incomplete and not informative enough to enable us to determine whether they constitute Senate operating expenditures under the Parliament of Canada Act. Neither the Senate’s policies nor its practices provide assurance that all the amounts reimbursed were spent for the operation of the Senate”. That is a damning judgement of the Upper House, the Senate.

That year, the Auditor General made 27 recommendations to improve the operation and efficiency of the Senate. I will give some of them. These recommendations just as they are show that the Senate is ineffective, inefficient and useless.

Recommendation No. 1 is that the Senate should define more clearly the mandates of the Committee on Internal Economy and its subcommittees. Recommendation No. 2 is that the Senate should publish its expenditures of public funds and the performance of its administration. The Senate should regularly publish a summary of the activities and expenditures of its committees. Mr. Speaker, it goes on like that for 27 recommendations.

(1700)

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the House to refer to this report of the Auditor General from 1991. I am told that this situation still goes on; according to all the information now available, the situation is still the same.

In conclusion, I will simply convey some facts on the Senate’s spending as reported in an article by Claude Picher in *La Presse* of February 3, 1994. He drew on a report by Gord McIntosh in the *Financial Post*, which reported some Senate expenses like changes or improvements for \$125,000 to Senate premises. As was said right here in this House, a senator had his floor raised so that he could have a better view outside.

An hon. member: It is disgraceful!

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, if you allow me, I will conclude with this. The Senate sat only 47 days in 1993, so each sitting day cost about \$1 million on average.

I repeat, this Senate is ineffective, inefficient and useless.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask for unanimous consent to defer all divisions on this debate to 10 p.m. tonight.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the suggestion of the Official Opposition whip. Do hon. members agree?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The five-minute period for questions and comments to the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead will now begin. The Parliamentary secretary to the Leader of the government in the House.

Supply

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the comments made by the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, but I was surprised by his attack on the Senate.

[*English*]

I remember in the last Parliament that the House was not full but had a great number of Conservative MPs from the province of Quebec sitting on the other side who were staunch supporters of the Senate. My recollection is that members of his party who used to be Conservatives—apparently they either saw some light or went blind, I am not sure which; either way they fell off the path and landed on another—or supporters of Mr. Mulroney and his government supported the Senate. They supported it so much they stuffed it full of good Tories.

We know this happened during the last Parliament. We know it was supported by Conservative members of Parliament, many of whom were from the province of Quebec and never said a word in the House about their electors wanting to get rid of the Senate. Now we hear this is the popular rage in his province. I do not recall hearing raised during the last election campaign anywhere in Canada that the Senate was the subject of extensive discussion, either in Quebec or elsewhere.

I am very surprised to hear the hon. member telling us today that everyone in his province is in favour of abolition of the Senate when this patently was not the case until at least October 25, 1993. Has something happened that has changed the minds of Quebecers? I am interested to know what it is that in his view has resulted in this—

[*Translation*]

—about-face, as we say, which changed the opinion of all his constituents.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for his very pertinent question regarding the comments I just made and the fact that the vast majority of Quebecers, if not all of them, are in favour of abolishing the Senate. The hon. member says that he has doubts about my statement, since the Conservative members who formed the previous government were in favour of the Senate, and in fact their government appointed many Conservative senators to protect its interest in the Upper House.

(1705)

The answer is quite simple: You only have to look at the results of the election held on October 25, 1993. There is only one Conservative member left in this House.

An hon. member: Two.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): No, I mean to represent Quebec. Quebec has only one Conservative member who, somewhat like senators, was appointed leader of the Conservative Party without being elected to that position. There is the answer. On October 25, 1993, Quebecers made a choice based on their interests; they made a choice based on what they really thought of federal institutions, and this is why they sent 54 Bloc Québécois members to represent them in this House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): I can see why the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands may have some doubts. This is exactly what we said during the election campaign, last October, and what we are repeating day after day in this House. For over 125 years now, Quebecers have been elected to represent their fellow citizens in this House and to talk to the rest of Canada. This time, there are, in this House, people who do not want to be appointed to the Senate under any consideration. We simply want to tell our friends from English Canada what Quebecers want. And what they want is to have their own country; they want to set up their own institutions, and this is why I say once again that Quebecers in general are not only in favour of abolishing the Senate, but are even in favour of abolishing their own representation in this House.

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on the subject of the appropriation of certain votes, and especially the \$26.9 million allocated to the Senate for the 1994–95 fiscal year. I think it is high time this government realized that sound government management starts with more prudent and especially more efficient management of taxpayers' money.

I think it is useless to allocate \$26.9 million to the Senate for program spending, an amount that will be added to the \$15 million it will receive directly in the course of the current fiscal year and to another \$12 million in services provided by various federal departments and agencies to maintain an institution that has absolutely no connection with how a modern democracy operates.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government, on a point of order.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I feel I must refer to Standing Order 18, because I am afraid the hon. member went too far. The text reads as follows, and I quote:

18. No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any Member thereof.

That is the rule under the Standing Orders. This is very important, and I hope the hon. member will speak respectfully of the Senate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I would like to thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for his comments. In fact, I have the text of Standing Order 18, from *Standing Annotated Orders* right here, because I want to be vigilant at all times.

(1710)

However, I must admit I was taking some notes in the chair, so I cannot comment on what was said by the hon. member for Joliette, who nevertheless caused the hon. member on the government side to raise his point of order.

I do want to make it clear to hon. members that I will remain in the House until the end of the debate. And I want to thank the hon. member for his remarks, because members must behave in a parliamentary fashion, as has always been the tradition in this House, and I am confident that we will continue to do so.

Resuming debate.

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I promise to show respect in my choice of words, but I must admit that it is sometimes frustrating to hear people speak against things you hold true and which are dear to you. If I talk about these institutions, it is not because I do not appreciate them, but rather because I believe that they should be modified, if not abolished.

I was going to say that the government claims that it wants to take steps to save money. Allow me to suggest an excellent way to do just that. As I said a moment ago, cancel the estimates for the Canadian Senate.

The men and women who are in the Senate, the other House, or more respectfully, the other place, were not sent there by the people; they are not accountable to the people for their decisions, therefore they are not democratic representatives of the people.

I will admit that they are people of considerable merit—as you can see, Mr. Speaker, I have the greatest respect for them—but no matter how much merit they have, the Senate is still a very costly institution for Canadians and Quebecers, especially given our present economic situation.

One must ask what was the reason for giving Parliament two houses back in 1867? And why today, more than 125 years later, we still have this non-elected House called the Senate?

Since 1960, 52 different bills have been introduced in this House with a view to changing either its role or its operations, or even questioning its very existence. This proves that the Commons had realized that the Senate urgently needed to be

Supply

updated. In 34 years, there has been 52 attempts, some successful, some not, to change the way the Senate operates.

At the time the Senate was created, it was meant to be a House of sober second thought. Its members were to serenely review legislation, free from popular pressure. That could be justified in 1867, but nowadays, the Senate's role has changed drastically due to the practical limitation of its authority.

In those days, the Senate used to be a place where the members of the Federation could be heard. It allowed for the protection, at the federal level, of provincial and regional interests. In today's context, the only link between senators and their province is the fact that they own property and reside there.

Nowadays, the Senate remains an institution without a basis, which derives its authority solely from the merits of its members.

(1715)

Above all, the Senate provides a legal framework for political rewards. In fact, I believe that, in its present form, the Canadian Senate is an anachronism as a legislative body, a mistake that costs millions of dollars in public funds.

Communications being what they were in 1867, the public was informed of decisions taken by the legislator long after the fact. In such a context, one could understand the existence of a Senate comprising people having reached the age of wisdom, having acquired an experience recognized by everyone; one could understand the usefulness of such an Upper House in protecting the taxpayers, the voters, against sometimes emotional or hasty decisions by legislators. Since the taxpayers were sometimes informed 30, 60 or even 90 days after the decisions were made, it was difficult for them to react and exert pressure on their member of Parliament.

But with our modern satellite communications, with the advent of television, people can exert pressure every day on their legislator, on their member of Parliament, and can tell them that they think he or she is making a mistake by supporting one bill or another, with the opportunity for all the wise people from each of our ridings—I think that there are 104 members in the Senate—in each of our ridings I can find at least a hundred or so wise men and wise women who can very ably advise each member of this House on the relevance of supporting one bill or voting against another one.

That safeguard is already guaranteed by our modern means of communication. We no longer need this Upper House to protect taxpayers from the mistakes that a single House, voting too emotionally or too hastily, could make.

Of course, some still think that this group of non-elected people must have a permanent right to veto decisions made by elected representatives of the House of Commons, that senators are here to restrain members of Parliament in their decisions and to correct their errors. It is true that members of Parliament can make mistakes. However, we are accountable to our constituents and they are the ones who will judge us. Not six months later. They have an opportunity to judge us every week when we go back to our riding and even before because, when an error is

Supply

too blatant, you can be sure that taxpayers back home call their member in Ottawa to pressure him or her into reconsidering his views.

Yet nobody will judge the actions of the senators in the Upper House. These individuals are there, appointed by the government in a partisan way and often for services rendered. They stay there until their retirement at 75. We then must pay them a pension on top of having to pay the full salary of their successors.

You will understand that I cannot consider such a treatment to be in accordance with the principle of democracy. You will therefore better understand my opposition to the payment of \$26.9 million for program expenses to an institution that is in no way representative of Canadians and Quebecers.

The five provinces that once had an Upper House abolished that political institution. That was the case in 1968 in Quebec, which was the last province to abolish the Senate because it no longer served a need that once existed. The same question arises for the Canadian Senate.

Can we consider abolishing the Senate? For almost 30 years, the question of the further existence of the Senate has constantly been raised. The Supreme Court gave a break to the Senate when ruling in 1980 that Parliament could not abolish the Senate without having a law passed by the British Parliament.

(1720)

Yet, at patriation time in 1982, the main aspects regarding the powers of the Senate, its regional and provincial make-up and its non-elected nature were enshrined in the new Constitution, which opened a door for the government.

Rather than taking steps and solving once and for all the Senate issue, the government preferred to focus on Senate reform, with the results that we now have. How can senators justify being allocated \$54 million a year when the Senate does not sit for long periods of time, when recess periods are numerous and long and when absenteeism is very high even when the Senate is sitting?

Do people know that 450 employees had to be hired to work for the 104 senators. This is an average of 4.3 employees for each senator? Do people know that \$54 million represents a yearly average of \$520,000 for each senator? We could create a lot of jobs with \$54 million.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I wonder why we have to add to the burden of the taxpaying population of Canada and Quebec an extra \$26 million to maintain a non-democratic institution that

does not represent at all the regions and has not been given any mandate by the people.

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the passionate speech of the hon. member. Much has been said about the Senate already.

During the election campaign, many people asked me to do something about the Senate. I believe we all have the same problem, we want to improve the Senate. My question is about the Senate. Most civilized countries have a Senate, but I heard the opposition party's members say that they want it abolished.

What kind of checks and balances do they think we should have for the House of Commons? Do they think we have to abolish the Senate to improve the system, or would they consider an improved Senate which would work the way it should?

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat to the hon. member that the provinces which did away with their upper houses never regretted it. The province of Quebec, where the Legislative Council was abolished in 1968, never regretted that decision, and the laws are not worse than they were.

The people of Quebec barely noticed the disappearance of the Legislative Council. If it had not been for the headlines in the dailies, a good part of the population might never have known that the Legislative Council had ceased to exist.

I repeat, the modern means of communication are the watchdog of the people. When the Prime Minister of the former government announced his intention to pass legislation to limit old age pensions, a little lady, very shy, very modest, rose up in front of television cameras and said to the Prime Minister: "Charlie Brown, you broke your promises".

It did not take long, it did not take a Senate to make the Prime Minister realize that he was about to do something that the people did not approve. It took only a single and modest taxpayer to tell the Prime Minister, in front of the cameras, that the bill he was about to pass was unjust for a good many people.

It did not take a Senate, the Prime Minister backed down and the bill was never voted on.

(1725)

I challenge the present government to try to pass, tomorrow, a bill which would be against the best interest of the people, and then try to enforce it despite the opposition of the population. The Senate would be of no help in such a case.

Senators themselves had to be called to order a few months ago when they asked for a pay raise. It is not the House of Commons that made the senators reconsider their position, it was public opinion. Senators were told that they had not shown enough wisdom to realize that in a recession everybody had to

Supply

tighten their belts. It is not the Senate, in its wisdom, which understood it had gone too far, it is public opinion alerted by the media. The House of Commons told the Senate to show more wisdom. All this goes to prove that our democracy is well protected, even without a Senate which costs \$54 million a year.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I think it is absolutely essential that this House question the relevance of the Senate. This Upper House made up of members who are nominated and not elected—it bears repeating—goes against our democratic system in which we take so much pride. In fact, it is against any form of democracy to give important decision-making powers to a nominated House. That is why I rise today against this fossilized institution that costs taxpayers millions of dollars.

I want to remind my colleagues opposite and the House that, on January 28, 1957—a long time ago—a member, I think he was a Liberal, suggested the following—and I quote in view of my colleagues' lack of memory: "We will call a meeting between the federal and provincial governments and, taking their recommendations as a starting point, we will make the Senate into an efficient instrument for Parliamentary governance". Liberals are probably still studying the issue, which is probably still a priority for them, 37 years later.

The federal Senate is the only non-elected House still in existence in Canada. Having understood what a nonsense it was, provincial legislatures abolished theirs. Unfortunately, on the threshold of the 21st century, we are still debating the issue in this House.

The Senate was created in 1867 to quietly review legislation, free from the glare of public pressure. However, over time, practical limitations were imposed on its powers. The Upper House long ago abandoned its practice of introducing bills. Furthermore, it can, even if it only rarely does so, block bills that the people's elected representatives have democratically brought in. Such an opportunity arose in 1961 in connection with a bill respecting the dismissal of the Governor of the Bank of Canada, and again in 1964 over the bail-out of the unemployment insurance fund. More recently, we saw the Senate block bills concerning the GST and the NAFTA. Rarely does the Senate invoke this power akin to the sword of Damocles dangling over the House's head to block government bills, the reason being that Senate appointments are basically partisan in nature.

Appointments are handed out to acknowledge services to the party in power. That is an undeniable fact. The Senate legitimizes the practice of doling out political rewards. This is an aberration of the federal system which purports to be democratic. The appointment process is the reason for the passive role now played by the Senate. It also explains why a party newly in

power like the Liberals is in such a hurry to gain a majority in the Senate.

One patently obvious example of the kind of partisanship which prevents the Senate from making objective decisions is the speed with which Senator Jacques Hébert, without mentioning any names, opposed unemployment insurance reform during the Conservative reign. So concerned was he for the unemployed that he had gone on a hunger strike four years earlier to show his support for young people and the jobless. Well, Senator Hébert does not seem to be quite as perturbed this time around by the Liberal reform which reduces unemployment insurance benefits. At least he has not shown any signs yet of being perturbed. Surely his lack of passion has nothing to do with partisanship. Or does it?

(1730)

Getting back to the role of senators, each one is appointed to represent a region of Canada. One of the objectives in creating the Senate was to ensure regional representation. However, we would be deluding ourselves if we believed that today's Senate provided real regional representation. Speaking about regional representation, how can we forget the passion with which Senator Gigantes who represents the senatorial division of Delorimier in Quebec cautioned Quebecers—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I will take the time to check but, as far as I know, the members of this House should not refer to other members or to senators by their names but by the names of their ridings. I will check but I would still ask the hon. member to keep this in mind in his comments as much as possible. I will come back to this if necessary.

The hon. member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Sauvageau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this clarification. I checked and I thought we could use names but I will refrain from doing so.

The senator I just mentioned, who represents Delorimier in Quebec, warned Quebecers against the possible failure of the Charlottetown Accord. He even predicted such a failure would lead to a crisis similar to what happened in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Do you see tanks in Quebec, senator? Who did the Delorimier people vote for in the last election, senator? We wonder who you represent today, senator.

This senator recently did it again, predicting a civil war—what a wise man he is—in Quebec if that province ever becomes independent. This senator represents Quebec. Is this wise senator acting like a good regional representative when he accuses Bloc members democratically elected by the Quebec people of being traitors. I doubt that this senator really represents his region. As I said earlier, the fact that he represents Delorimier, which was named after a Quebec patriot, is one of the system's

Supply

absurdities. I repeat, who did the people of Delorimier vote for on October 25, senator? Again, who do you represent?

I would like to shed light on something. I would like to quote from two articles that appeared in *La Presse* to show the intellectual rigour of this senator from Delorimier. In September 1992, this senator said about the Charlottetown Agreement:

A no vote in Quebec would not be a return to the current status quo. Under the current status quo, all the premiers from English Canada approved the agreement which, as Professor André Tremblay said, contains all the concessions that English Canada would be prepared to grant to Quebec.

Two months after the Charlottetown Accord failed, this senator said: "Obviously, if the rest of Canada could not swallow the Charlottetown Accord, Quebecers now have only two choices, namely the status quo and independence without previously negotiated economic association".

Two months earlier he was saying that the status quo was not an option and two months later, that it was the only option. What a wise man!

In the wake of the Charlottetown Accord he said this:

The rest of Canada will never allow the Bloc Quebecois to wield influence by holding the balance of power.

Someone who was appointed in a non-democratic fashion and who represents a Quebec division dares to speak against democracy. That is the Senate for you!

An hon. member: Against duly elected representatives.

Mr. Sauvageau: Against duly elected representatives!

(1735)

Let us now look at these exorbitant costs of this other House, by the way. According to the Auditor General's report of 1991, the Financial Administration Act could not apply to the Senate. The Auditor General says that the usual accountability mechanisms do not apply to the Senate. Without such mechanisms or appropriate alternatives, neither the Senate nor the people can be sure that it is managed with sufficient concern for economy and efficiency.

Moreover, the expenditures declared by senators in the public accounts are incomplete. The Auditor General's report tells us that neither the Senate's policies nor its practices provide assurance that all the amounts reimbursed were spent for the operation of the Senate. The Senate administrators cannot distinguish the Senate's operating expenses from the senators' personal expenses.

That is serious, Mr. Speaker. But what are the Senate's actual expenses? In 1990-91, the total budget of the Upper House was \$40 million and today it is \$43 million. Need I say that this is public money, funds provided by the taxpayers, and the Auditor General's report tells us that there is no control over this

spending. Forty-three million dollars with which we could create jobs for the unemployed is wasted.

The senators have a very busy schedule but they still have plenty of free time. They sat for 29 days in the four months from February to May 1993 and they collect an annual salary of \$64,400, which is public, plus a \$10,000 non-taxable expense allowance, which is also public, to which we must add 64 travel points to which they are entitled and this is also public.

This is a little more than the average salary of taxpayers who work 40 hours a week. We could go on talking for a long time about what journalist Claude Picher in *La Presse* calls a list of horrors.

For example, based on the Auditor General's report for 1990-91, I would like to ask you a question now, Mr. Speaker. Because I do not know her division, can I name Senator Cochrane or not?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I want to clarify some points at the end of your comments, for the benefit of the House.

I simply want to say that your 10 minutes have now expired. However, I will recognize you for another minute if you want to conclude your remarks.

Mr. Sauvageau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, a public report released by the Auditor General refers to Senator Cochrane, not to mention any names, who, on top of her \$60,000 salary, as I was saying earlier, and her expense allowance of \$9,000, cost Canadian taxpayers \$35,000 in travelling expenses and \$49,000 in office-related costs. Canada does have its own museum of horrors and its own villains in that museum.

In the minute I have left, I want to point out how absurd it is, in a democratic system, to have a house of non-elected members with decision-making power. Canadian dignitaries who are so proud of their democracy have no lesson to teach to other countries. When will they abolish that House which costs Quebecers and Canadians \$43 million every year, even though it is ineffective and non-democratic?

We are in the midst of an economic crisis and our debt increases by thousands of dollars every minute. The federal government cannot continue to waste public money on a useless institution.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before proceeding to the period of questions and comments following the intervention from the hon. member for Terrebonne, I would like to bring some clarification to the issue of naming either members of Parliament or senators.

[*Translation*]

Those comments are from the Annotated Standing Orders and refer to Standing Order 18(3): "What is acceptable depends largely on the circumstances, but personal attacks, insults, obscene language or words which question a Members' or a

Senators' integrity, honesty, or character are not in order. To reduce the possibility of personal references, convention further requires Members to refer to each other by title, position or constituency name. Likewise, the Senate is usually "the other place," and Senators, "members of the other place".

(1740)

I simply wanted to make this clarification for the benefit of the House during the rest of the debate, until 10 p.m. this evening. Resuming debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the previous speaker and the one prior to him on a couple of things.

First of all, I want it perfectly clear that I stand firm in the belief of a truly triple-E Senate, and I also believe that what we presently have is ineffective and truly a waste of dollars for a lot of reasons.

One area that I am familiar with is the United States, as that is where I came from, and although the systems are slightly different the Senate has a significant purpose in that country and that is to protect the districts and regions from exploitation from larger regions. That is primarily its purpose.

For example, the state of Montana, with one representative by population, is protected by two senators, as all states. Montana could have been exploited on a great number of occasions had it not been for that set-up.

First of all, if we had no means of protection from exploitation by larger regions for smaller regions, what process would we use to make certain that does not happen? I am going to assume that he is going to answer in the same way as the previous speaker, that the people would take the appropriate action and put a stop to it. If he believes that, would he believe that the people of Canada as a whole should be able to take appropriate action if Quebec decides to separate?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sauvageau: I would like to thank the hon. member for his question, as is the tradition here in this House. First of all, I want to say that, before their independence, the Americans promoted a philosophy which resulted in the fact that their Senate, although quite effective, is not representative. It is representation by population. We often heard about Loyalists demanding rep by pop and the United States having rep by pop. Of course, it is all right to have two senators per state, but then you do not have rep by pop. However, this is not the place to review the U.S. Senate, so I will try to give a more direct answer to the hon. member.

Supply

About the triple E Senate, we believe that an elected House can undoubtedly make responsible decisions, because we support ministerial responsibility. An elected House could and should be able to make decisions concerning some legislation. Two elected Houses, if the Senate were to be a triple E Senate, could create confusion about which House must make the decision. The ten Canadian provinces, which do not have two, but only one House, show us how one House can make decisions, and very sensible decisions at that.

For example, the province of Quebec, with a population of about 7 million, got rid of the legislative council in 1968, that is nearly 30 years ago. No one in Quebec has any regrets about that decision. Other provinces also got rid of their legislative councils and I do not think they have any regrets about it. So, in Canada, an elected House where hon. members would abide by the principle of ministerial responsibility could give proper consideration to the decisions they are about to make.

(1745)

And if Quebec were to become sovereign, I hope Canada will respect the democratic principles it has been advocating since 1867.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and friend, and also neighbour, the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, clearly explained why he is against spending \$26,952,000 for the Senate. I totally agree with him, given that such a measure would, in the long run, abolish a costly but far from essential institution, namely the Senate.

It is a well-known fact, and has been for quite some time, that Quebecers do not see why they should pay to maintain the Upper House. The country is going bankrupt. Social programs are being slashed. In senior citizen centres, soup portions are being reduced from four ounces to two ounces, but we can still afford to appoint senators.

In my riding of Frontenac, every Friday, I receive a call from Mrs. Lessard, from East Broughton in my riding of Frontenac—and she must be listening now, because I informed her—and she asks me the same question: "Hon. member, when will the government increase old age pensions? I have not quite paid my heating bill yet". She said that only last week. She also asks the following question: "When will the government abolish the GST? They promised to do so. I have some purchases to make, but I am waiting for them to abolish the GST".

How can I explain to Mrs. Lessard the government's delay in abolishing the GST, which they would rather hide than abolish? How can I explain to Mrs. Lessard that she will only get a \$1.28 monthly increase in her old age pension, while, in the other place, some are handsomely paid, appointed, not elected, to serve until they reach 75 years of age? If we had jobs like that in

Supply

the riding of Frontenac, I am sure the list of applicants would be very long.

To prove to you to what extent the Senate is unknown in Quebec, I will give you the results of a poll I conducted in my riding, in July of last year, with some of my assistants. We asked some people in the riding about the Senate, to find out what they knew. We crisscrossed the riding of Frontenac, from Thetford to Plessisville, from Coleraine to East Broughton, via Saint-Jacques-de-Leeds, Sainte-Agathe and Saint-Sylvestre. We visited grocery stores, credit unions, shopping centres, gas stations, etc. In fact, we went everywhere we could find people.

We wanted to measure how voters reacted to the Senate, and to find out whether they knew any senators. I can tell members opposite that I heard many sighs and saw many skyward looks.

(1750)

Many told us straight out that the Senate was useless, or that it was a circus manned by people appointed by the government as a reward. We asked those who were more receptive whether they knew any senators and could name some. Only two names out of 104 came up, and not very often. They were Solange Chaput-Rolland and Jacques Hébert. Considering their past achievements, it is clear that their notoriety did not come from the fact that they were senators.

Ordinary people do not see how the Senate could possibly help them. They only see a group of individuals appointed for reasons sometimes obscure, on whom they never call to defend their interests. As one of my constituents pointed out to me, it is difficult enough for people to know if they have to go to their provincial or their federal MP for a particular problem. They just do not want to bother finding out what a senator can do for them.

Last year, I polled the people of my riding on their knowledge of the Canadian Senate and on their reactions to the \$6,000 non-taxable raise that the senators had voted for themselves, as hon. members will all remember, especially the members opposite. A \$6,000 non-taxable increase is worth about \$12,000. Do you know that, in my riding, many people work 50 weeks a year and barely earn \$12,000? It is outrageous.

As the hon. member for Joliette was saying earlier, public opinion has been the senators' watchdog. During the three weeks following this shameful decision by the senators, public opinion in Quebec and in Canada ran heavily against them and they had to undo what they had done.

My colleague from Terrebonne gave some examples of outrageous expenditures, like the senator who had his office remodelled at a cost of more than \$100,000. I built myself a very good house for about half that amount. There are some Canadian families, and I use the word Canadian to please the members opposite, who cannot afford a \$60,000 house. Yet, the senator had his office remodelled for double that amount and more.

We will have a provincial election in Quebec in a few months and I invite my colleagues across the way to come and defend the Senate during that election campaign. They will see what Quebecers think of the Senate.

To illustrate my point, I will tell you that when the hon. Marcel Masse was representing my riding in the House, I phoned his office to inquire about the name of the senator responsible for our region. Of course, I did not talk to Mr. Masse personally, but I talked to highly qualified individuals with eight or nine years' experience since that was at the end of the Conservative regime. Believe it or not, no one in his constituency office could give me an answer. After waiting for many days, someone finally called me back to give me the name of my representative in the Senate, but I have since forgotten that name.

(1755)

Again last night, my assistant here, Manon Genest, called the Senate communications service to know which senator was responsible for my riding, Frontenac. "We will call you back" was the answer. This is a fine example of the active involvement of senators in political life! When even the communications service of the Senate itself cannot give the name of our representative right away, frankly, I must tell you that that does nothing to give me confidence in the other Chamber.

If I ask the hon. member sitting next to me what riding he represents, I am sure that it will not take him 20 minutes to give me the answer. He knows. If I call the House of Commons to know what riding Antoine Dubé represents, they will tell me immediately.

An hon. member: The hon. colleague.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): My hon. colleague, to be more precise.

We also asked the people we met to tell us what they remembered the most about what the Senate did. Among the older age group, some people mentioned Senator Hébert's hunger strike. That stayed in people's minds.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I have to interrupt to indicate whether names are to be used or not. Early in the hon. member's speech, I agreed that names be mentioned since he was conveying the results of a survey he had done in his riding. I thank him for the fact that in a later part of his speech he did not mention parliamentarians by their names but by their designations instead. I hope we will abide by this rule up till the end of this debate. The hon. member for Frontenac.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for the patience you always show and for the thoughtful manner in which you correct us. You do it so well that in my turn I would like to beg your pardon for having mentioned the senator by name. I will therefore skip a few paragraphs to conclude with the way our famous senators are appointed.

Supply

I finally learned the name of my senator, and the reason for that appointment. When we look at the list of Quebec senators, the 21 left, most of whom live in Montreal, we find that one is an organizer for the Conservative Party, one is a fundraiser for the Liberal Party—I know him—another was a top adviser to the former premier of Quebec who just left office, yet another is an organizer for the Conservative Party, and another is a good Liberal, yes, and has been a Liberal MP for a long time. The letters P.C. are added to his name.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a list of 21 senators and none of them is truly representative of Quebec.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I want to thank the hon. member for Frontenac for his co-operation and understanding.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia has the floor.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, there is something I do not understand. I am really confused. If the hon. member and his party want to leave Canada, why are they so interested suddenly in the future of Canada? If the member wants to destroy our country, what importance does all this have for him?

(1800)

Why should he talk about the future of Canada if he has no interest in it?

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend my colleague in the Reform Party for asking his question totally in my language.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers, every year, pay 24 per cent of all taxes to the federal government. As long as Quebecers are part of this country, we will defend their interests here.

The members across the way and those in the Reform Party are probably thinking: Why do so many Quebecers wish to leave the Canadian family? My hon. friend in the Reform Party is happy in the present regime, and so are his children. As for me, I am sad and unhappy to be part of Canada, and I wish Quebecers would finally wake up and decide to give their children who are listening to us on television a country to which they are entitled: Quebec.

We see senators who are defending the regions. But when I ask what senator represents my region, which is made up of three ridings, nobody knows. He never comes to the ridings of Frontenac, Lotbinière or even Bellechasse. There are three ridings in my region. But we never see our senator. He is a Conservative senator who was appointed by the preceding government.

I tell you this: we pay, so we have our say. The present Senate is just a bunch of patronage appointees, people who were appointed for services rendered. And we have no confidence that they will defend Quebec's interests.

[*English*]

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, I would like raise a question about the role of a Senate in an ideal world. Most countries have found that the idea of a totally sovereign legislature in the form of a House like ours is not adequate in protecting the interest of the people as a whole.

What we have at the moment costing \$27 million a year is not the ideal kind of chamber that we see around the world. This was brought out by hon. members today and I agree. It is essentially a chamber which is serving the purpose of a sober second thought. We should not be too harsh on it because it has done a very good job.

For example, the amendments it has proposed recently to the bill on redistribution served a useful function. There was some partisanship which served the country in bringing out debate over the GST, over free trade. These served useful functions.

However, \$27 million a year may be a bit expensive. The role we should strive for is that the Senate take the other functions that we see in similar chambers around the world, namely the protection of regional minorities and for senators who have a longer election—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I regret, but it is very difficult for chair occupants when members choose to split their time, in fact speak for 10 minutes and only have five minutes for questions and comments.

I hesitate when there is only a minute left because I appreciate that all members want to make their point leading up to their questions. I would ask the member for Capilano—Howe Sound whether he wants to leave the comment as is or if he has a short question to add.

(1805)

Mr. Grubel: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time constraint. I am sorry if I went on a little long. I did not keep track of time.

With a reformed Senate, one which is modelled after successful upper chambers around the world, I wonder whether there is not a chance that the member who spoke so articulately against the present system might be willing to consider that a reformed Senate might be in the interest of all Canadians, in particular the people of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, back in 1968, Quebec Premier Daniel Johnson abolished the provincial equivalent of the Senate, the legislative council. Is Quebec worse off today because of the elimination of that council 26 years ago? Quite the contrary. The National Assembly in Quebec is much

Supply

more effective. The legislative process is shorter. Is it not true that the \$65 million we spend for the Senate would be a great help to create jobs? I would like to hear your views, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I thank the hon. member for Frontenac for his invitation. Time permitting, I could have accepted, but I am afraid I cannot.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity as the member for Lévis and above all as the official opposition critic for training and youth to report on consultations I have had carried out with young Quebecers concerning the Senate. They have been most revealing.

Let me explain the context of those consultations. Last February, young Quebecers participated in a youth Parliament experiment. I noticed that one of the motions passed as a matter of priority concerned the abolition of the Senate. I found that concern interesting and, later on, asked a few young assistants to help me with a survey of young people on that issue. I feel that my findings make a suitable follow-up to remarks made by the hon. member for Frontenac on the point of view of senior citizens in his riding.

What do young people think? I asked them first of all what they thought of people in the Senate. My first finding is that they do not know what the Senate is all about. Most of them do not know what it is. Very few of them know. I will quote the answer, such as it was, that they gave: "It is a room full of older people who cost a lot of money to the taxpayers and whose work does not appear to be useful, in the eyes of young people". Who could give even an approximate number of senators without counting the empty seats in the Upper House? The vast majority of young people, almost all of them, did not know that there were 104 senators. As for determining the composition and the role of that other place, we can only get an answer by referring to the Constitution.

A second question that was raised was: "But who elects these 104 people?"

(1810)

These young people wondered, since these are not elected people, how they can get involved in various debates, supposedly as representatives of the Canadian citizens.

In Quebec, for young people as well as older people who are familiar with the Senate and have read about it, such as young people who are studying political science or history, the Senate is the Mecca of patronage, with members from God knows where, but who surely have good friends in high places. Some young people believe that, once they have been appointed, senators are the people of Canada who benefit from the best job

security, because we all remember that the age limit in the Senate is 75.

The job situation today in Canada as well as in Quebec is a precarious one for young people. To them, job security is an unfamiliar concept. According to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 is 17.7 per cent. According to the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse in Quebec, 4 out of 10 part-time jobs in Quebec are held by young people under 25; part-time jobs represent 33 per cent of all jobs held by young people between the ages of 15 and 19; and more than two-thirds of young people under 25 who are working get minimum wages.

Therefore we should not be surprised by the perception or position of young people regarding an institution that costs almost \$1 million for every session day.

Who are they? Very few young people can identify more than five. Since I cannot give any name, I will somewhat change my speech.

Those who could identify some senators were able to do it by recalling current events. For instance, a very well-known person in Quebec has resigned because she was 75 years old. People finally realized that she was much better known for her novels and the books she had published than for her work in the Senate.

It is the same thing for a senator known for his constitutional law expertise, who had a high-profile role at the time of the Charlottetown Accord. I know that by mentioning that fact only many people in Quebec will be able to identify that person.

Besides, how can we blame young people for not being able to identify the senators? The best one of them could do was to name five out of 104. I have not put my colleagues on this side of the House through this test but I think it would be worth trying to ask new members for instance—because older members might find it easier—how many senators they can name.

An hon. member: How many senators could the Chair name?

Mr. Dubé (Lévis): I will not ask the hon. Speaker of the House to take part into this exercise because of his parliamentary responsibilities.

The young people I consulted did not know that senators represented ridings, just like MPs. They did not know that. How can we blame them since I am convinced that adults themselves would not know any better. I must admit that I myself could absolutely not say which senator is representing my riding. It is not obvious. Perhaps I should have done some research but I realize after listening to the last speaker that I cannot tell the name of the senator who, among 21 others, is representing me. I did not have to do this research but I must say that she never called or dropped by.

Nevertheless, how could we blame young people for not knowing their senators' names?

Supply

(1815)

Young people wonder how unelected senators can block bills like the GST. Remember that big debate. They blocked the drug patent bill, and once again very recently, we have the example of Bill C-18. The House of Commons and this government proposed postponing consultations on redrawing the electoral maps. The bill went to the Senate and the Senate asked us to reconsider our position. That is not the issue today, but we realize that it is a source of delay which slows down the work of the House of Commons.

You know, this federal system is already complicated for Quebecers. They already see it as double representation and duplication. I will not take you through this whole scenario again, but you see that the Senate duplicates what the House of Commons is doing. The triple E was mentioned, but I see it as a threefold exercise of political power and you can understand that young people, who already find it difficult to be interested in politics in this state of affairs, find this situation triply complicated and even more repulsive.

The Senate should act as a social conscience, but how can it play this role when senators are appointed by political parties and constantly surrounded by lobbyists. Some senators even sit on the boards of private companies. The various possible conflicts of interest are not considered. What about openness? Furthermore, senators now represent two political parties. Furthermore, the majority of senators currently belong to two political parties, one of which has almost been wiped out in the House of Commons. How can we explain such a situation to a young person interested in politics and tell him that the Senate is open to the future, when, in fact, the exact opposite is closer to the truth. I personally have difficulty explaining that situation, and I think it is also the case for any member of this House, regardless of the region which he or she represents, even outside Quebec. How can we claim that senators are representative of the different regions of Quebec and Canada when other political parties are present in those regions?

In the minute that I have left, I simply want to remind everyone of the extremely difficult context in which young Canadians and Quebecers find themselves right now. Last year, Gilles Lesage, who is a journalist for the daily *Le Soleil*, referred to the Senate as a nuisance costing \$50 million a year. This comment was not made by a politician, but by a journalist, an editorialist.

Remember the debate held last July, when it was thought that Quebecers and Canadians were on holidays and that they would not notice anything. Senators wanted to vote themselves a futher \$6,000 allowance.

Our young people see that senators have very good pension plans and working conditions, while they themselves are unemployed and worried about their future. Under the circumstances, is it really a surprise that a resolution from a group of young people interested in politics proposed, at the beginning of February, that the Senate be abolished. I certainly can understand them.

[English]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather surprising that Bloc members are telling us we should not have the other House and they are trying to remove the funding from the other House. They comment on how ineffective the other House is, when they sit here trying to destroy this House and this country. They talk about the ignorance of the people in Quebec and that they do not understand the other House.

(1820)

Why do they not take the opportunity to go back to the province of Quebec and tell people what a wonderful institution this Parliament is in both Houses? Why not take the opportunity to tell people how much better off they would be if they remained in this country? Why not do that rather than saying: "We are not aware of what goes on there. Therefore it is irrelevant and does not matter, so why not set up our own institution in Quebec City?"

Why does the hon. member and his colleagues not take the opportunity to make this institution work, both Houses that is? Why does he not take the opportunity to make this institution work, rather than thinking they are better off to pack their bags, walk out and destroy this institution and everything it stands for, thinking they would set up something better in Quebec City? What does the hon. member say to that?

[Translation]

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, it is my turn to be surprised. The questions and comments of my colleague from the Reform Party express a particular point of view.

We have a debt of over \$500 billion. In the six months I have been in this place, I have heard almost every day Reform Party members say that we must cut our expenses, that the way we are overspending does not make sense. On that I agree with you. We have to find ways to reduce expenditures.

What we must consider today is not the abolition of the Senate, but rather the funds requested by the Senate. Until there is a referendum on sovereignty and until the majority of Que-

Supply

becers support this idea, it is obvious that—since we are paying 24 per cent of taxes—we must protect the interests of Quebec.

Today, we are not requesting the Senate's abolition. We only oppose the funds allocated to it. We feel that, in these very tough economic times, these funds should be reduced. I am very surprised that Reform Party members do not agree with a measure aimed at reducing expenditures in Canada.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I think it is necessary to ask a supplementary question to follow up on the one just asked by my colleague from the Reform Party.

The member opposite says that he is not amending the Constitution when eliminating a vote in the Main Estimates. At least, I think that this is what he is saying. He is not abolishing the Senate, because an amendment to the Constitution would be required to do so, and I do not personally, and neither do my constituents, feel in the mood to amend the Constitution at this time.

However, this seems more or less what the member wants to do. Does he think, since the two chambers, the Senate and the House of Commons, are under the authority of the Constitution, that the House of Commons has the right to abolish almost all the Senate votes? Does he also think that the Senate has the right to abolish all the House of Commons votes, including his own?

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, the member usually asks questions that are, I will not say devious, but certainly clever from his point of view.

Let me repeat: no, the purpose of the motion is not to abolish the Senate. It concerns budget votes. I think we have the right to say, to estimate, to declare that the amounts voted for the Senate are too high. That is why we are expressing such an opinion.

A member of Parliament should, among other things, reflect the opinion of his constituents. I mentioned certain opinions, more particularly those of young Quebecers. Members from Quebec are here to say to the other side of the House: "Here is what Quebec thinks, here is what Quebecers think of this situation". That is the long and the short of it.

(1825)

I think my time is up, but I feel any member should share my concern, he should find ways to attract young people to politics. I think we should propose alternatives to young people so that they get interested in the public life. Therefore, any member should be open to discussion on changes, even if these changes affect something that he considers to be very important today.

Mr. Gaston Péloquin (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to defend the interests

of Canadian and Quebec taxpayers, by demanding that votes for the Senate's expenditures be cancelled.

I believe that this whole debate on the Senate is highlighting two aspects of Canadian federalism; it proves that it is not only inefficient, but also unable to renew itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century. As we all remember, on February 22 last, the Liberal government tabled its budget.

We must remember that this budget made significant cuts affecting the unemployed and senior citizens. Moreover, it increased the tax base for the middle class. Therefore, this budget hit the unemployed, senior citizens and the middle class.

When reviewing allocations in this same budget, one notices that close to \$27 million are ear-marked for Senate expenditures. No cuts there. This very brief analysis of the latest budget tells a lot about the Liberal government's real priorities, and even more about the operation of this bankrupt Canadian federation.

We do not want to play party politics, because we know full well that the previous government would have done just the same, and that the next one will do likewise. As we just saw, it is now simpler for the government of this country, regardless of the party in office, to hit the poor, those who are already reeling from the recession, than to ask its very rich friends, the senators, to do their share.

A country where it is easier to let the deficit grow, signing away future generations' life, where the only cuts are made on the backs of the needy, where government patronage appointees do not reduce their extravagant lifestyles while the public is stuck in a very hard recession, is a very sick country. It could even be terminally ill.

All in all, when we add indirect spending inherent in its operation, this Senate packed with the government's non-elected and non-representative friends, spends more than \$54 million dollars over some forty sitting days a year, about twelve hours a month. Moreover, the absentee rate of some senators is around 66 per cent. All this is highly significant.

Those nasty Quebec separatists are not the only ones asking that this House made up of non-elected members be eliminated. Somebody called Claude Ryan—maybe some of my colleagues have heard about him—proposed in 1980, in his beige paper, the elimination of the Upper House. That is why during the 1980 referendum debate in Quebec, federalists were proposing the total elimination of the Senate.

A few months shy of another important referendum, what do federalists suggest to Quebecers? The status quo. In other words, they want taxpayers to go on paying more than a million dollars a day to keep a House that represents no one.

Supply

Some Reform Party members could argue that, contrary to their unimaginative Liberal colleagues, they have a suggestion for Quebecers: the well-known triple-E Senate.

(1830)

This brings me to the second part of my speech in which I intend to demonstrate once again that Canadian federalism does not work and never will.

The proposal for a Triple E Senate reflects a very poor understanding, not only of Quebec but of the history of Canada and of the purpose of our institutions. I would urge the Reform Party to examine the reasons and discussions that led to the adoption of the Constitution Act, 1867. At the time, francophones and anglophones decided to unite in a confederation that recognized the equality of its two founding peoples. It took some vigorous negotiating before these two founding peoples managed to agree on their choice of political institutions for this country.

A constitutional expert, whom I will not name but who is also a member of the Senate, recalled, and I quote: "Sir George-Étienne Cartier wanted parity between Quebec and Ontario for the Senate and he got it, in other words, 24 senators for each province".

We signed acts of union with a partner, English Canada, based on two houses, one with proportional representation and one with equal representation for Upper and Lower Canada. Over the years, as new English-speaking provinces were added and of course new senators for each province, Quebec's political clout in the Senate gradually diminished, so that today, Quebec is under-represented in the Senate in terms of its demographics, with only 23 per cent of the members in that house.

As though this were not enough, our English Canadian partner now wants to marginalize us even further and consider us as only one of ten partners. I may recall that in 1867, the Fathers of Confederation felt that the presence of the Senate was also required to restrain the democratic excesses of members elected by universal suffrage.

Perhaps the Liberal government still thinks it is necessary to restrain the democratic excesses of elected members. However, it should realize that times have changed and that Canadian and Quebec public opinion has changed as well.

To sovereigntists from Quebec, English Canada's desire to make the Senate more effective, elected and equal is not a problem. However, there is no way we would agree to be included in this reform.

We will not let the other provinces further diminish Quebec's political clout within our federal institutions. On behalf of all Quebecers, we say no, no forever to this kind of reform. Senate

reform will happen without Quebec, or not at all. If the Reform Party or the other supporters of a Triple E Senate truly wants to provide English Canada with a democratic legislative system, one that is less cumbersome and more efficient, then they should begin by ensuring a victory for the sovereigntist forces in the next Quebec referendum.

Need I remind members that to reform the Upper House, the constitutional debate would have to be reopened? Pursuant to section 42 of the Constitution Act, the consent of the federal government and of seven provinces representing more than 50 per cent of the population is required in order to alter the powers of the Senate or the way in which senators are appointed.

After the recent failures of the Meech and Charlottetown agreements, to name only two, I think that Canadian federalism has proven itself to be inflexible and incapable of adapting to new realities.

The members of this House who are concerned about the state of Canada's public finances must support the Bloc's motion. Canada can ill-afford from an economic standpoint the luxury of having a Senate. It is no longer dynamic enough or flexible enough to carry out in-depth reform. Until such time as they acquire institutions which correspond to the realities of Canada and Quebec, the members across the way sometimes enjoy pointing out that the official opposition is not truly representative of Canada as a whole.

In conclusion, I would simply like to recall the findings of the latest Gallup public opinion poll which asked how Canadians and Quebecers felt about the Senate. On July 22, 1993, Gallup found that for the first time ever since it started asking this question, that is since 1944, a majority of Canadians said they were in favour of abolishing the Senate. Fifty-four per cent favoured abolishing the Senate, as the Bloc advocates, while 37 per cent said it should be reformed, the option favoured by the Reform Party, and 4 per cent preferred the status quo, the option being defended today by the Liberals.

(1835)

The results in Quebec are even more revealing. Sixty-eight per cent said they were in favour of abolishing the Upper House, while 20 per cent would prefer to see the Senate reformed and 4 per cent prefer the status quo.

The numbers speak for themselves. All that remains for the government to do is to heed the will of Canadians and Quebecers and vote in favour of the Bloc Quebecois' motion.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, while the hon. member is engaged in giving the House a history lesson he might be well advised to include in his remarks the fact that long before Claude Ryan in 1980, or long before they asked the

Supply

first question in a poll in 1944, the predecessor of the NDP, the CCF, was calling for the abolition of the Senate since 1933.

This is the longstanding position of our party with respect to the Senate and the effrontery over the decades at having an appointed body in the centre of our democratic decision making process. I have certainly found it very difficult on occasion to explain Canadian senators when I have been in other countries with them. They tend to be treated as if they are American senators. Everybody sort of oohs and ahs when they hear that someone is a senator. We have to take them aside and explain that they are not like American senators who get elected every six years, that these people are appointed for life and are thereafter untouchable except by the good Lord himself. It is something that most banana republics would not tolerate, the idea of having a body like this one appointed basically for life or until age 75.

I wanted to say that we agree with the notion that the Senate should be abolished. It is certainly something that has been on the Canadian political table for a long time, long before the Bloc Québécois came along. We have been open in recent years as to how the Senate might be reinvented on a more democratic basis to deal with some of the political problems that the country has experienced, and we continue to be open to that.

As for the existing Senate, that appointed body, we continually take the same offence at it that we have historically taken. We therefore agree with the thrust of the motion to do away with the current Senate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Péloquin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for reminding me that his party and others before already debated the idea of the Canadian government abolishing the Senate.

I would just like to make a short remark here, Mr. Speaker, if you allow me. I wonder why this state of affairs exists. We members of the House of Commons are asked to tighten our belts, cut our budgets and act like good representatives of the people. Members of this House travel economy class, you realize. The representatives of the other House always travel business class. Members of this House refused, with the consent of the Chair, which you represent, to continue accumulating frequent flyer points. All that was eliminated.

(1840)

However, members of the other House continue to use those points, which are a bonus. So I ask why members of the other House have special privileges that are better than ours, when we are just asked to cut the fat.

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I think today's debate is most important since we are addressing the issue of the other place.

Today's economic environment does not allow us to take for granted the amounts allocated to the Upper House, especially since we in the Bloc Québécois have been defending, since the beginning of the session the entitlements of the most disadvantaged in our society. Given the difficult situation now faced by the people, that is, the insecurity and unemployment—there is 14 per cent unemployment in my riding—how can one support allocating money to the Senate, when all sectors are facing cutbacks? How can one justify the money spent on the other place with its 104 members?

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a few examples. Last year, the Senate paid a total of \$125,000 for a new hall with mahogany and granite panels.

An hon. member: That is not cheap!

Mr. Fillion: The Senate only sat 47 days last year but it employs stenographers. Even when it is not sitting—and I will let you draw your own conclusions—these stenographers still get paid. They do not even have to show up at work. Some of them even fill their free time by offering their services to other firms, thus receiving two salaries. The total bill for taxpayers comes to \$1.6 million.

The senators also have their own \$29,000 fitness centre when there are schools in dire need of such facilities. Yet only one senator uses the centre on a regular basis.

Between February and May 1993, the Upper House met for six days in February, 10 days in March, five days in April and eight days in May for a total of 29 days in four months. At least one day out of two, 17 senators or more were absent. They can miss 21 days a year without penalty. After that, they must pay \$60 for every day they miss. It is totally ridiculous.

They also have their own furniture store. Eleven people—carpenters, cabinetmakers and even a professional framer—work there. As far as communications are concerned, each senator claims on average \$10,000 per year in telephone charges. All these examples show how public funds are spent.

(1845)

We are not talking about individuals democratically elected by the population. No, senators enjoy privileges without being accountable.

The existence of the Senate generates costs which Canadian and Quebec taxpayers can question in this difficult economic period, a period during which the government is targeting social programs. In that context costs related to the Senate have very little to do with the daily reality of Canadians and Quebecers.

People take an interest in the Senate because it generates costs, not because it plays a proactive role. It is the elected members who have democratic legitimacy. The public would not tolerate that a non-elected House, with members appointed by the central government, playing an interventionist role. Senators represent neither the population, nor the provincial

public authorities; yet, every year, taxpayers have to pay for that institution.

Those taxpayers have the right to ask themselves questions. However, it was not until 1991 that an audit was conducted for the first time. The Auditor General tabled a report on the administration of the Senate and made 27 recommendations. He said that the Senate is a unique institution operating in a rapidly changing framework. Senate management is different from that of a department, a public organization or a private business. Being a legislative body, the Senate can define and adopt most of the rules which have a bearing on its activity.

Consequently, the usual accountability rules do not apply. Even if you argue that the budget has been decreasing in recent years, it is not enough. Only minor cuts were made to the 1994–95 budget. For example, no Senate employee will be laid off, while thousands of positions are being abolished in the public service. There were 450 person–years in 1992–93, and there will be 447 in 1994–95. The numbers change only because of attrition, retirements and resignations. Six senators will retire this year. Unlike federal public servants, they will be replaced very quickly by friends of the people sitting on the other side.

Quebec and Canadian taxpayers must pay for the Senate. Yet, more than ever before, public money should be spent in a useful way. We must ask ourselves if it is appropriate to maintain the Upper House, considering all the costs involved. Why is a non-elected House allocated public funds which could be better used? Why, in the present context, should we continue to pay for an institution which has no fundamental reason to exist?

We live with a constitutional status quo. The situation is that the Senate continues to exist. How can we tolerate such a situation?

(1850)

This status quo results in the continued existence of the Upper House, as well as the continued existence of major costs. This is what is happening. The Senate is the best example of the apathy of our federalism. That federalism is removed from the reality. In fact, discussions on a reform of the Senate began soon after Confederation, and, in the last 20 years or so, the number of studies, reports and proposals has increased significantly. The situation which persists is also the result of unacceptable federal proposals and is unacceptable for Quebec.

Therefore, I firmly support the motion tabled by the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, opposing the vote of \$26 million under the heading Parliament—The Senate—Program expenditures.

[English]

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

Supply

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to the order made earlier today, a recorded division on the question now before the House stands deferred until 10 p.m. later today, at which time the bells will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

[English]

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 5—PARLIAMENT

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Vote 5 in the amount of \$164,985,000 under the heading Parliament—House of Commons—Program expenditures, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995 (less the amount voted in interim supply) be concurred in.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to join in this very important debate. I would like to report to this House and to our listeners on what we, as a government and as members, have accomplished during the past months.

On October 25, in the last election, Canadians voted massively for change. The hon. member said a change for the better, and that is true, we have had a Liberal government since October 25. In this massive vote for change, Canadians sent more than 200 new members to the House of Commons in Ottawa. For me as the Government Whip, it was a challenge to organize the allocation of offices on Parliament Hill as well as the proceedings of this House. At times it was a difficult task, but it was a challenge and a very important one.

Supply

(1855)

I must say that with the co-operation of my colleague, the Deputy Government Whip and member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, we managed first of all to ensure that each member had an office on the Hill. We negotiated with the whips of the other two political parties recognized in this House, we negotiated various budgets including research budgets and budgets for party leaders and House officials, so that by January 17, when the Prime Minister, the government called back the House, we would be ready to go and members would be ready to function and fulfil the mandate they received on October 25 as legislators.

From my very first day as Government Whip, my objective was to reduce operating costs for all parliamentary activities and their administration. We started with the budget for the various caucuses, and after several meetings we managed to save a couple of million dollars, which is quite substantial.

When allocating members' offices, we were determined to keep moving and installation costs to a minimum. In fact, I released the figures several months ago. We managed to save quite a bit of money. We saved about \$1.1 million on moving costs alone here on the Hill. This was a reduction of 87 per cent over what was spent after the 1988 election.

The purpose of this initial operation was to meet the commitments we made during the election campaign. In the red book we said that we wanted to set an example by starting right here. If we tell people they have to tighten their belts, we have to start by tightening our own here in this House. And we did that with our first operation, the allocation of members' offices. We told members and ministers: These are the offices you have been allocated and you take them as is, and if any repairs or improvements are necessary, we will make a report and ensure only the absolute minimum is done. There will be no abuse of the system. And the results are there.

We did not want to stop there. Once all the members were accommodated on the Hill, we started looking at all the expenses, all the privileges, all the things provided to the members. That was the beginning of what people commonly call the Gagliano plan. I am pleased to note today—a few weeks before the summer recess—that the exercise was not just for the media, it was not simply a shopping list that we made as long as possible to take credit for it. We did not say we were going to cut five or six million from the operating budget of the House of Commons just to be able to brag about it afterwards. No, we did it because we believed in it. We did it because it was necessary. There were things which had to be changed, things which were no longer suitable, no longer necessary.

(1900)

We had two criteria. To save money, naturally, but also to give members services they really needed to do their jobs effectively. We did not cut for the sake of cutting, we analyzed each cut. I must, at this stage, thank the management of this House which provided me with the figures I needed, and put their knowledge and experience at our disposal. Of course, I also had the support of my caucus colleagues. As politicians, we must make choices. With the staff of the House I was able to define options, and then it was simply a matter of deciding which option to implement.

We have only a few weeks left before we adjourn for the summer. Mr. Speaker, we are supposed to adjourn on June 23. I am proud to say that the Gagliano plan, that is the expenditures reduction plan which I announced to all Canadians on January 16 in a press conference, has now been completed. There are still a few points left. This very afternoon, there was a meeting of the sub-committee on internal economy regarding parliamentary associations; a meeting is planned to adopt a plan to make the cafeteria and the restaurant more efficient and to save money. By June 23, my cost control plan will be in place. Some steps were already implemented in February and March.

But, my plan is not part of the estimates we are going to vote on tonight. The savings do not appear in the grand total since, at the time we had to table the estimates for the House of Commons, our plan was not ready, of course, but we still had a deadline to meet, a deadline to cut government expenditures and table the results in the House, which had been set by the President of the Treasury Board.

I am sure that members have had a look at that booklet. The plan is mentioned in there and it will appear in the next estimates, but I want to ensure the House that the savings which were announced are real and that they are possible. Some savings have already been made, and will be carried over year after year. As we said in the red book, we want to be fiscally responsible, and will continue to be so. Mr. Speaker, I will continue. As I said on January 16, in the short time we had between the October 25 election and the opening of the current Parliament on January 17 and despite all the work involved in organizing the situation on the Hill and the offices of all members, we came up with a reduction plan in which we addressed what seemed at the time the most feasible and visible goals we could reach.

We are currently considering other changes. There are more savings to be made. What is important is that we are willing to take our responsibilities and ready to announce and defend our positions. And when you take logical and fair decisions, you can only be confident like I am. I believe this expenditures reduction plan will work, because I have received several letters from

voters throughout the country who think that this is a step in the right direction and who encourage me to go on.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues in the government caucus. Without their support, I would not have been able to make these savings.

(1905)

My colleague, the deputy whip, and I are not the only ones responsible for these achievements. We were fortunate to have the support of all government members. I also want to thank the other whips and the members from the opposition who sit on the Board of Internal Economy and who approved our plan and made it all possible.

We still have a long way to go. As I said, this is only the beginning. However, I would like to outline our achievements, so that everyone watching us tonight can realize what we have done so far. Some of these things might not seem important, but all together, they show how courageous and determined the government is.

For instance, one of the things we did is look at the whole issue of members' special travel allowances. As everyone knows, each member is entitled to 64 trips from Parliament Hill to his or her riding and, according to the rules, these 64 trips could also be used to go anywhere else in Canada. We reduced this number to 20. This means that members are still entitled to 64 paid trips a year but only 20 of them can be used to travel across the country. I think this will generate very significant savings. We also looked at the whole issue of printing services and mass mailings. The board has just adopted these new regulations that will allow us to save over half a million dollars a year.

We did not cut services to members. They are still allowed four mass mailings a year, as they have been for a long time, to inform and communicate with their constituents. Although we kept these services allowing members to communicate with the public, we managed to save over half a million dollars by introducing new procedures.

We are now looking at the whole issue of food services on the Hill. Many journalists wrote that taxpayers have been subsidizing sumptuous meals for members of Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you and I, as well as my colleagues and all those who had lunch or dinner at the parliamentary restaurant know very well that nothing is subsidized and that the prices we now pay are the same as in any establishment and are sometimes lower elsewhere because of competition.

When we talk about the deficit related to food services here on Parliament Hill, let us not forget that we employ over 3,000 people and, as you know full well, any employer of this size has a partly subsidized cafeteria or restaurant for its staff.

Supply

We acknowledge that we have to make some cuts, that we have to save money. However, we also realize in this plan that as far as slashing expenditures is concerned, we have an obligation as an employer to ensure that a proper food services system is in place for our employees. We are in the process of finalizing our report. We have looked a little at what the private sector has done so that our system can be comparable and meet the target of savings in the order of \$1.5 million to \$2 million per year. We want to ensure that our employees have access to an adequate cafeteria at or near their place of work, as it the case everywhere else.

The newspapers made quite a big fuss over the fact that our members had access to an exercise room and to the services of a masseur, all at taxpayers' expense. We also reviewed this expenditure. Since April 1, our members have had to pay a fee to use the gym. This was also something that was in the plan.

(1910)

We reviewed the matter of the barber shop and hair salon, two services which had also been the focus of some criticism and we rationalized these operations. Today, if a member or senator wants a haircut, he or she will pay the same price as shops located off the Hill charge their customers.

The operation of messenger services was also rationalized. This was very important. Our aim was not to reduce service to members or to rationalize a service that had not proven useful in the past. In fact, we wanted to keep pace with new technology. There is fax, electronic mail and many facilities we now have as members that we did not have before. So in view of this, we rationalized our messenger service.

We looked at the whole allocation for which we were criticized. Of course, the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs studied all these issues and approved the plans. We saved nearly \$2 million on printing the House agenda and other documents in order to streamline and save money, but still to ensure that hon. members have what they need to do their job and give our citizens the services to which they are entitled.

So as I said at the beginning, this is an initial plan. I intend to continue and I am sure that in the weeks and months to come, with the co-operation of my caucus, my colleagues and the opposition parties on Internal Economy, we can make other savings and improve the operation of this House at the same time.

When we said during the election campaign that we wanted to set an example starting with ourselves, that we wanted to regain credibility with Canadians, I think that we took a step in the right direction. We will continue as I said.

You are signaling me that my time is up. I would again like to thank my caucus, my colleagues and the Prime Minister for letting me help reduce public spending and also improve the

Supply

services of this House and make it more functional and more credible.

[*English*]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss the concurrence of the main estimates placed before this House.

I would like to congratulate the hon. whip on the government side for his fine speech and his Gagliano plan that he talked about. I was hoping that his Gagliano plan does not become a Galileo plan and they revert to star gazing rather than getting the job done.

He also said that they want to give an example starting with themselves to demonstrate to the country that they are prepared to provide leadership. I cannot think of a better opportunity than this evening when they get the opportunity to provide leadership in the vote we will have later on the estimates because there are two things that concern us as Reformers. One is to give Parliament the opportunity to get back into its real role of passing its opinion on the estimates rather than rubber stamping what the government lays in front of the House.

(1915)

There are two elements that have denied Parliament the opportunity to fulfil its role. One is the convention of confidence which has prevented this House from being able to express its opinion on the estimates. The other is excessive party discipline by the government in power.

These two elements when combined have led to the fiscal rubber stamping by the House of Commons once the estimates have been reported back to this House by the committees which were supposed to have examined them beforehand. I say supposed because quite often the committees do not even address the main estimates before they are tabled in the House and through convention and party discipline the House is forced to concur. Therefore it is a sham and a mockery of the role of Parliament to control the public purse.

The traditional role which Canada inherited in many aspects and in many forms from the government and traditions of the British parliamentary democracy is that the Canadian House of Commons reviews the government's proposed expenditures. We inherited that tradition from the British parliamentary democracy. It is outlined and enshrined in the British North America Act, 1867.

This theory goes back a long way and is based on certain principles. The crown must come to this House and request funds on the advice of the crown's ministers. In Canada, the requests originate from the Governor General on the advice of cabinet, which forms the government, to this House of Commons in the form of recommendations. As in Britain, it is the

House of Commons which grants or denies—and let me emphasize or denies—the requests for funds after having reviewed them.

In theory this House has the authority to grant or deny the elected government's request for funding of expenditures it wishes to make in the upcoming year. Unfortunately, as I said, because of the convention of confidence and excessive party discipline we have made a mockery and a sham of the process. It has been many a long year since we have seen this House exercise its prerogative to express its real opinion on the estimates laid before it.

The record of this House in making reductions to the government's expenditures at this stage in the estimates process has been a complete and dismal failure. It is a fiscal disgrace and an abomination. Since 1969 the House of Commons annual review of the estimates has resulted in a reduction on percentage terms of only one-millionth of one per cent. By one-millionth of one per cent have we in this House reduced the estimates in the last 20-odd years that they have been laid before this House. That is an absolute disgrace and my colleagues agree with me. Listen to them over here.

The last time this House exercised its prerogative was in 1973, 21 years ago. It was a Liberal government, albeit a minority government, and that is when conventions of confidence really do matter. The government at that time, when confidence really did matter, allowed a reduction in the estimates. Ever since then Liberal governments and Tory governments—the only governments we have had—have refused to allow any further reductions in the estimates.

Tonight the government said, and I quote the hon. government whip: "Give an example starting with ourselves". That is a direct quote of what he said. Now is a wonderful opportunity for government members to say that the convention of confidence and strict party discipline need not necessarily apply any more and this House is going to demonstrate the open government they so liberally campaigned upon last fall. This is their opportunity to realize upon that commitment they made to Canadians, to express the will of this House and reduce the estimates as laid before us.

(1920)

The amount was \$20,000 out of the entire government expenditure which was around \$60 billion at that time. The government cut \$19,000 from the Department of Labour for an information program. We talk about advertising and polls today and I think we should cut them as well, but it cut \$19,000. It cut \$1,000 out of the salary of the president of the CBC. There must have been a tiff with him at that point in time. I think Reformers have a tiff with the CBC today and maybe we should cut more than \$1,000 out of his salary, but we are not recommending that at the moment.

Supply

For the record, back in 1973 when the government allowed the estimates to be reduced, albeit by \$20,000, the member for Shawinigan, our current Prime Minister, voted against the motion. He refused to allow the reduction. Here is a great opportunity for him to make amends by allowing this motion to go through this evening. The Liberal government has a great opportunity to change and redress the problems of history and the things that have gone on in the past.

The confidence convention has traditionally been interpreted to mean that any motion to reduce the vote on the estimates would be viewed as a test of the confidence of this House in the government. We are saying that if there is a reduction in the estimates the government need not necessarily have to resign. We are not going to go that far.

The confidence convention reinforced by excessive party discipline leads to fiscal rubber stamping and fiscal irresponsibility by the House of Commons and the committees when it considers the estimates at this stage. The result has been an extremely modest reduction since 1973, as I said, one-millionth of one per cent.

We would like to see that changed. The negative implications of those two things have contributed to the fact that we are now \$500 billion in debt. This House has never been able to express its real opinion as we rack up \$40 billion deficits every year. This year is going to be no exception.

We have never been able to express our opinion on the lavish and excessive government spending which has gone on unabated now for over 20 years since we last had a balanced budget. Why? Because there has been no genuine parliamentary safeguard on government spending and there has been insufficient scrutiny by this House on these changes. Change and reform are required and are long overdue.

That is why the Reform Party has offered an alternative. There has been a longstanding Reform policy that says we want to modernize the confidence convention. We are saying to allow this House to express its will freely and democratically on the estimates. If there are reductions, then let there be a motion after it has all been debated and voted upon. If reductions are approved then let a motion of confidence be placed in this House. If that is approved as well then the government knows it still enjoys the confidence of this House and can continue to govern.

These are the things we are talking about as Reformers bringing a fresh new face to Parliament, a new opportunity to do things so much better. For the government whip who said earlier to give them an opportunity to show they are prepared to make an example of the government, here is a great opportunity for them to start now by allowing the reductions.

We are talking about a reduction in money spent by the Board of Internal Economy. The main estimates according to the President of the Treasury Board indicate they are going to spend \$164,985,000 in the administration of the House of Commons.

The government whip has told us of his plan which has already led to specific reductions in this fiscal year of over \$2 million. We are saying to this government, since that amount has already been reduced and eliminated from spending by this government in this year, which was acknowledged by the previous speaker, then surely it is not a threat to the convention of confidence that we amend the main estimates to reflect the new reality.

(1925)

The point we want to make is that these reductions are already in place. They have been approved. The government whip has acknowledged that point in his plan. We are saying there is no threat of confidence by recognizing that and putting them back and changing the main estimates to reflect the reality.

We will be talking on other motions about minuscule amounts like \$20,000. Out of the total expenditure of \$163.6 billion this government is going to spend this year, what is \$20,000? Is \$20,000 a threat to convention? Does the member think the government is going to fall on that? No. That is the point I want to make.

Another point is the Liberal platform that cuts the grants and subsidies. We are concurring with that point because we also believe in cuts to grants and subsidies. We knocked 5 per cent off that as well.

There are three great opportunities where those members can concur without any threat whatsoever to them and to their government by acknowledging that a cut has already been made. The main estimates should be amended to reflect that reality. The minuscule amount of \$20,000 based on all the inflation caused by the Liberal government in its past life and the Tory government is not what it used to be. It is worth a lot less than in 1973. How on earth could that affect the confidence this House would express in the government?

Liberal policies say cuts to grants and subsidies. We concur so let us just do it. That is all we ask. That is the point. My challenge to the government and to all members on the other side of the House is to recognize what they have been saying which was reiterated by the government whip: "Give an example starting with ourselves". A direct quote of five minutes ago.

Here is a great opportunity to do so. I challenge government members to stand up later this evening and vote according with what they have said in the red book and in accordance with the platform on which they were elected.

Supply

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for his good comments about me, but I regret he is turning this debate into something it is not. We are debating budgets and not free votes or recalls. I am sure the hon. member knows that.

Yes, I said that the plan of reducing the expense is in effect. It was announced in January. The board took a decision on the global plan. Some decisions were taken on individual items and some are already in effect. Some are entering, for example, the July 1 householder. The restaurant section has not been decided on.

I said at the beginning that we had to adopt a budget. We had a deadline to prepare a detailed budget of expenses that the government wanted to introduce and have passed by the House according to the rules. There is nothing wrong. Next year we would show a reduction in expenses instead of what the member is proposing.

(1930)

If I am correct, he is proposing to reduce the budget expense by \$2.471 million. The difference between the member and I is that everything we accept is detailed. I do not know what he is counting in the \$2.471 million. He should tell the House which items they are because the motion is on the House budget. He should do a service and tell us about them.

I thank all my colleagues in the 35th Parliament. We started in good will and displayed good decorum. We have done very well so far. However I do not think this is a case for a free vote. In an administrative way we do not know the exact effect of the plan I announced on a yearly basis. For this fiscal year, and being the author of the plan, I do not know exactly how much it will reduce this budget.

The member says that we should reduce it by \$2.471 million. He should start by giving us the details. Did he check the figures with members of the administration? We enact policies but on a daily basis they keep the books.

From the beginning I have approached this issue on a non-partisan basis. If the member checks with his colleagues on the Board of Internal Economy who have been working with me on the matter, I am sure he will concur. The purpose here is not for each party to make political points. It is to make sure we save money for Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I will respond to the question. The member sits on the Board of Internal Economy and tells us that he has a plan.

An hon. member: It is a secretive board that nobody can get into.

Mr. Williams: "It is a secretive board that nobody can get into", according to my colleague. The Reform member who sits

on the board advised me that certain savings have been introduced, passed and are being implemented at this time. This year there will be a savings of that amount of money.

The point I made during my speech was that it was a confidence convention. I never mentioned a free vote. I am just saying that we should allow the House to recognize that savings have already been approved by the Board of Internal Economy in the amount of \$2.4 million. Why do we not collectively recognize that already exists and change the main estimates to reflect the new reality?

The President of the Treasury Board comes into the House any time he exceeds a budget and asks for more money. All I am saying is that now we recognize the Treasury Board is not going to be spending the money, let us make that recognition in the House. That is the point I am trying to make today.

I know the government whip concurs with our idea of saving money. They have gone along and made these changes. Let us recognize that and change the estimates now to reflect that.

What signal are we sending to other departments to save money if we say that we do not care if they save money, that they have been allocated money and we are not going to change it, that we are not going to take it back from them, that they can go ahead and spend it anyway? This is a great opportunity for them to reduce the estimates.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question of the member who tells us to reduce the budget by this amount.

(1935)

Does he have a list to prove what he is saying now, that it is in fact the amount of savings realized by the government whip's plan? Or, is it not true that those figures are concocted and he has no idea what the savings are? If it is true that he has such savings in mind with a detailed list, I say to the hon. member that I am ready to give him unanimous consent to table the list now. If he does not have such a list, why does he not just withdraw the item from the Order Paper?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I have a list in my office. I do not have it in front of me at the moment. I was advised by our member who sits on the Board of Internal Economy, although it is a secretive board and we do not know what really goes on there until the minutes are tabled long afterward, that these payments—

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That is an unfair statement about the board because it has passed a policy wherein the minutes are tabled once they are approved. In the past few months we have been tabling minutes in the House every two weeks because the board meets every two weeks. Before the member makes such a statement he should check his facts.

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I must inform the government whip that I do not believe that is a point of order. Certainly as we all know there is representation from the various official parties.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, my point is that our representative on the board has assured us of these savings. The cuts are effective for this particular year. Therefore we are asking the House to recognize the savings and amend the estimates accordingly.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have just a quick comment that has more to do with the member's remarks on the question of party discipline and the question of confidence.

I would like to say to him as a member of the Reform Party that members of the Reform caucus should be careful not to think that this kind of debate about free votes, party discipline and the confidence convention came to the House with them.

I recommend the member read the McGrath committee report on parliamentary reform tabled in the House in 1985. It was an all-party report, headed by Jim McGrath, a former long time Conservative member and then lieutenant-governor of Newfoundland. I was a member of that committee in which it was said that the Canadian parliamentary system was far too dominated by party discipline, that there needed to be a broader range of issues on which members of all parties felt free to vote as individuals rather than as party members.

I made my first speech calling for more free votes in the House in 1981. By way of advocating a little humility, I just say there were people advocating this kind of flexibility in the House of Commons before those guys came along. If the member wants to read the McGrath report, I would recommend it to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I regret the member's time for questions and comments has elapsed.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak about the main estimates for budget year 1994-95.

These estimates represent the fulfilment of the government's commitments to Canadians. They also represent a balanced approach to promoting economic growth in jobs while taking steps to reduce the deficit.

These estimates reflect the fact that there are no quick and easy solutions to the financial issues which confront Canada. It is essential that Canadians understand this in order that they may be able to make with us the difficult choices which lie ahead. I am therefore pleased to have the opportunity to talk about some of the highlights and significance of these estimates.

First it is important to set these estimates in the context of the government's fiscal plan. When the minister tabled his budget in February of this year he said that it represented the first stage of a two-stage budget. That budget has set the country on the road to economic recovery, but there is still a great deal of work now being done to prepare for the second stage of the budget.

As we promised, the government has launched a number of initiatives and reviews which will enable us to accelerate our progress down that road to economic recovery.

(1940)

It is important that the government take action but it is also important that the government take the time to take the right action.

[Translation]

For example, the President of the Queen's Privy Council and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal is reviewing the programs of every department. He is also reviewing the structure of every commission and federal organization. Moreover, he is co-operating with the provinces to find ways to reduce overlapping and duplication. These measures will ensure more efficient and affordable government services to Canadians.

As for the Minister of Human Resources Development, he is currently conducting the most comprehensive review of the social security system in Canada since that program was put in place. It should be clear to everyone that the government intends to do what is necessary, and to do it in a responsible way, from a financial point of view. The results of these reviews and other initiatives will be made public as early as this fall, so that they can be discussed in the most open budget process ever put in place by a government.

Canadians will have a say in the critical decisions which will have to be made. At that point, we will have reached the second stage of the budget.

[English]

As the President of the Treasury Board said in the House when the main estimates were tabled in February, the estimates set out the details of \$160.7 billion in planned expenditure for this fiscal year. Overall program spending, which is total spending less debt service charges, is increased by just 0.7 per cent.

Spending on most government programs has been reduced. The operating budgets of government departments have been reduced by \$400 million, with further reductions of \$600 million to come in the next two years. Defence cuts total \$745 million this year alone, with more to come. Grants and subsidies to business have been substantially reduced. The government has frozen the wages of public servants for a further two years. This action has reduced the cost of providing necessary services

Supply

while making it possible to protect jobs and meet job security commitments to our employees.

At the same time as taking these necessary reduction measures, the estimates provide for \$700 million for the implementation of the national infrastructure program. This is a key element in fulfilling our red book commitment to create jobs. We know there are two sides to the ledger. There is the expenditure side and there is the revenue side. With so many Canadians out of work the revenue side of our ledger book is not in good shape either. We are paying attention to both sides of the ledger book.

It was the Prime Minister who launched the infrastructure program in his December 1993 meeting with the premiers. Within eight weeks agreements had been signed with every one of the provinces in Canada. In spite of those who said it could not be done, a three-level program was put together in a matter of weeks. The municipalities have found the money to participate and all three levels of government are working co-operatively.

Furthermore the federal government came up with its \$2 billion share of the program without increasing the deficit. As we promised, funds were reallocated from other less productive, less high priority federal programs.

I take this opportunity to say that we expect 80 per cent of the project funding will go toward core infrastructure such as water and sewer systems, roads and bridges. We are committed to funding projects with the municipalities that are their priority. Some of these projects are non-traditional but nevertheless are innovative and worthwhile.

(1945)

When the budget discussions take place this fall it is important that Canadians understand where their tax dollars go, what benefits and services are provided and who receives them. It is important because I believe that many Canadians have been given the impression that with a few minor changes here and there, a bit of tinkering we could balance the budget and live happily ever after and nobody would be hurt.

This is nothing but a fairy tale. We can and we will return to full economic health but difficult choices lie ahead and making the right choices requires that the public be fully informed and involved.

When the main estimates were tabled in the House in February both official parties in opposition predictably expressed their disappointment and claimed that the budget did not go far enough to eliminate waste in government.

We recognize that we must constantly find more efficient ways of delivering services to Canadians and we are doing that. The Treasury Board secretariat is pursuing a variety of initia-

tives to improve efficiency, including a number which take advantage of the exciting potential of new information technology. These initiatives promote responsive and affordable government services.

In one of many examples 18 government departments are together establishing 10 Canada business service centres, many of them with the participation of the provinces and local authorities. These centres reduce complexity and overlap for business clients and provide one stop shopping with no increase in costs.

A wide variety of initiatives to improve service and reduce costs is described in part I of the estimates. It makes good reading for those who want a current picture of what the government is really doing to improve efficiency.

[*Translation*]

I certainly recognize that, in a parliamentary system, the role of the opposition is to oppose government's measures. Moreover, it may be that the two sides truly disagree as to which policies would best serve our country. However, we are not doing Canadians a service by implying that the deficit could be reduced overnight if only someone had the courage to take the bull by the horns.

Last February, the hon. member for La Prairie said that there was some fat and some waste in the government operations, and that billions of dollars could be saved if only the government eliminated waste and poor management practices. The fact is that if these simple measures were enough to solve the problem, we would already have taken them.

[*English*]

As the main estimates show, the cost of operating the entire Government of Canada, excluding defence, is just 12 per cent of the total expenditures of \$160.7 billion, about \$19 billion. If the government were to shut down all of its operations, cancel every one of its programs, fire every one of its employees, there would still be a deficit of more than \$20 billion.

There would be no food inspectors of course, no air traffic controllers, no prison guards, no scientists working for Canadians in the fields of health and the environment, and no tax collectors either. Some of us might like that, but then the deficit would be even higher. That there would still be a deficit without any government operation assumes of course that there would be somebody to write cheques for the other 88 per cent of government expenditures.

The other levels of government receive transfer payments of almost \$29 billion, most of it going to health care, to social services, to post-secondary education and the equalization payments which ensure that from coast to coast to coast in this country the less wealthy provinces have an opportunity to provide comparable services to their citizens.

Supply

(1950)

There is another \$20 billion that the Minister of Finance perhaps would need some help in writing cheques for if we had no public service, no government operations; \$20 million to Canadian seniors for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement as well as another \$19 billion to the unemployed.

Perhaps people who complain about fat and waste could tell us how we can possibly solve the deficit problem by getting rid of the government.

Canada has just recently been rated by the United Nations once again as the best place in the world to live. This is something all Canadians should be proud of. It has not happened by accident. It has not been achieved without a cost either. We have been borrowing to finance our programs, programs which many Canadians have come to view as a right of citizenship.

The public accounts of Canada show that in the 10 years from 1984 to March 1993 the debt of the federal government has more than doubled to just over \$500 billion. As a result this year's main estimates provide for interest charges of \$41 billion or 25 per cent of the budget on that debt.

If we add another \$11 billion for defence and \$5 billion for crown corporations we begin to get a picture of where the money goes. We spend money on what Canadians want and need and that is what these estimates are all about. That is also why we have a deficit.

Part I of the estimates provides a comprehensive overview of the government's expenditure plans. I recommend it to all Canadians who want to know how their money is spent. I recommend it to all Canadians who want to participate in a meaningful and positive way in the budget consultations that will take place this fall.

[*Translation*]

So it is not being honest to tell taxpayers that we only need to cut some fat to alleviate the tax burden, or that it is possible to significantly reduce spending with no one feeling any real adverse effect.

To try to make Canadians believe that there is a quick fix and that the government is not prepared or able to apply it, undermines the confidence of Canadians in their democratic institution. When they hear about these so-called quick and simple solutions, Canadians are less apt to realize that some hard and vital decisions must be made.

My comments may sound somewhat like propaganda, but I want to tell this House that the government intends to ask members from all parties, as well as the general public, to participate in a comprehensive discussion on the importance of the budget. To that end, we must question the very nature of government spending. I would like to conclude, for the benefit

of those who might still be sceptical, by referring to some comments made by the Auditor General.

[*English*]

In his 1991 annual report the Auditor General said that he had an impression that a dedicated, competent public service is dealing with complex problems that have developed over the years. He also stated: "The deficit is not a result of bureaucrats burning the taxpayers' money but rather the reasons for the deficit are profound, complex and difficult to solve. I sense that there are few easy fixes".

In his 1992 report he went on to say that the reality is that governments alone do not create deficits. International forces beyond our control and the needs and demands of the electorate also contribute to deficits.

I would like to conclude with a final piece of advice from our Auditor General also from the 1992 report: "There is a need today for full and frank discussion about deficit, debts and related public policy choices".

(1955)

I invite members of the House today to begin that frank, honest, open discussion and I assure Canadians that this government will give them the opportunity to be part of that debate as well, well before the budget for 1985-96 is prepared, well before the tabling of the next version of these estimates.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of comments.

We all realize that to eliminate the deficit like that is an impossibility. One does not have to have the brains of a rocket scientist to figure that one out. However, what puzzles me is when we hear the rhetoric from that side of the House. Surely we are not ready to give up prison guards, food inspectors, air traffic controllers. We know the difference between essentials and waste.

However, how come when we hear speakers from that side of the House we do not hear such things as contributions to MP pensions which are somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$17 million per year? How come we do not hear about Challenger jets that ought to be gone? How about blue limousines that we could do without? How about free residences and all the other things of that nature that amount to several millions of dollars? Why do we not ever hear that?

Ms. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member came in late, if he was not listening, if he was too busy talking to his colleagues over in the corner or if he has not read the estimates that he is now preparing to vote on later this evening. Had he and had he been listening since he walked into this House in January he would have seen our government tackling virtually every one of the issues he just mentioned and many more.

Supply

We are not looking at saving money by the millions. We have looked at saving money by the billions. The member really should know that if he has been paying attention. I do not know if he is attempting to mislead people. He knows very well that the matter of MPs' pensions is in the hands of a commission established specifically by law after every election for that purpose and that report will be coming back and we will be taking action on that report.

He also knows perfectly well that I said very clearly that the finance minister in tabling his budget said this is a two-stage budget. This is step one. We have done more cutting in this budget than in previous budgets. We have also closed some tax loopholes and he knows that very well. We paid attention to that side of the ledger as well by making sure that there is some increase in revenue and that tax breaks that certain people were getting are no longer there. However, we have done five times more in cutting expenses than we have increasing revenues through closing those tax loopholes.

The member knows perfectly well that these estimates on which he is voting today represent billions of dollars of cuts in government expenditures. I think he should be saying that honestly to the Canadians who are listening to us tonight.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I have a very brief comment.

I think we are making some progress in this House. I noticed the hon. member has recycled very large portions of a speech that I heard the member for Calgary Southwest giving about a year ago with the respect to the fact that of course you cannot balance the budget by tinkering, of course you cannot balance it merely by cutting fat. We know that. We still would like to see some cuts but the bottom line, as members will see, in our zero in three plan with which I hope members are familiar is that if one is ever going to get the finances of this country under control, deep substantive cuts have to be made.

(2000)

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I notice the Reform members always get up and say that without ever saying where they are going to cut or who they are going to hurt.

We know perfectly well in the analysis of their three-year deficit reduction plan that it tabled during the election campaign that that could not be done without hurting 1.5 million children in this country who live in poverty, without hurting senior citizens who depend on their pensions, without hurting single parents, two-thirds of whom live in poverty with their children. Their plan was not realistic. Their plan would have destroyed the social fabric of this country. Their plan would have destroyed any sense of justice in this country.

The member opposite has said there were not cuts. From the moment our government took office we have been reducing unnecessary expenditures. The Prime Minister was the first to set an example by getting rid of his limousine. Members know the actions that have been taken to cut the use of—

Some hon. members: Ah, gee.

Some hon. members: Good.

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but this is ridiculous. I am saying to Canadians that we have done exactly what the Reform Party is telling us we should do and those members are sitting there saying "ah, gosh, gee". Members cannot have it both ways.

Do they want these cuts made or do they not want these cuts made? When these cuts are made, they should be giving credit. We started at the very top with our Prime Minister, then with reducing the number of cabinet ministers, with reducing the budgets that those cabinet ministers have to operate on, and with reducing our own expenditures here in this House of Commons because we know that Canadians are counting on us to set the example. We are doing that.

To suggest that we are tabling estimates that do not include several billion dollars in cuts is simply not accurate or quite honest.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Questions or comments? Resuming debate. I am waiting to recognize someone who wants to speak on this motion. The hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River.

Let me see if I can be of some help to my colleagues in the House. When we began the debate on the motion, we began with the government whip. We recognized people from other parties and then came back. In this instance as we continue this debate, the last spokesperson being the parliamentary secretary, I did look to see if there was a member from the Official Opposition who wanted to speak. Not having taken notice, I then looked to this side of the House, the government side. I recognized the member for Kenora—Rainy River.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I suggest to my colleagues across the way that I was not trying to jump in front of them as far as the speaking order of the House.

As my colleague from Beaver River would know, having sat beside her for a number of months in the last Parliament, this member would not at all be interested in doing that sort of thing.

Tonight I would like to talk about issues that are very close to my heart as they relate to the estimates. Those who have had the opportunity to spend some time with the member for Kenora—Rainy River know that my interests are the interests of a very large rural riding. In that large rural riding there are some issues that I think need to be discussed in this place.

Those issues of course are the issues of what northwestern Ontario is all about. That basically is forestry, mining, tourism and a small amount of manufacturing along with the retail sector.

Like the rest of Canada, my riding is dependent on a very small business sector to create and maintain valuable jobs. The small businesses in Kenora—Rainy River can be found servicing, complementing and drawing on the strengths of major resource sectors. The viability of small and medium sized businesses in my riding is typical of the diversity needed to build secondary industries in Canada.

There is no doubt that main estimates' spending in 1994–95 in the federal budget is geared to reinforcing a solid small business sector to create jobs and spark the economy. It is because of the dependence on small business that I am pleased to see the initiatives in the 1994–95 budget addressing stability and growth for small business.

(2005)

As I have said before, as a member of the opposition in this House in the previous Parliament, one of the major concerns that I focused on was the lack of initiative for small business, the lack of help that we as parliamentarians gave to the small business sector.

In Canada we must ensure sustainable and viable resource based industries are supported. But in order to build an economic foundation for the long term we must diversify our economy to take advantage of our raw materials and our technological development. Perhaps nowhere in Canada is that more evident than in northwestern Ontario where diversification and secondary industry development are the keys to opening tomorrow's doors.

The small business working groups recently established by this government are examining the initiatives needed to foster an environment for growth and give business the tools to expand.

I am happy to see that the government is making access to capital and appropriate training a priority for the small business sector. I have risen in this House on previous occasions and lamented on the sad state of the relationship between small businesses and the financial institutions.

I sincerely hope a new code of conduct between small businesses and banks provides a more fruitful relationship than we have seen in the past. Entrepreneurs need capital investment in order to expand and start up new ventures which provide the jobs this country is looking for. Expansion of the Small Businesses Loans Act will also enhance the flow of capital to legitimate business operations in Canada.

Supply

Small business also needs the expertise to explore export markets and utilize new technology. The budget speaks well to these concerns. The Canada investment fund for example will help companies access leading edge technology. As well, the business centres will help make information on government programs and services more readily available as well as providing insight into strategies for exploiting export markets.

The remote locations of many businesses in Canada have historically made it difficult to access pertinent information. Federal government spending on information services will give these businesses the knowledge they need to explore new technology and make inroads into international markets.

I am anxious to work with the business community in developing this government's objectives. Believe me, we have many ambitious and capable entrepreneurs in Kenora—Rainy River if only given half a chance simply by doing very key and very elementary things.

Let me give a couple of examples of those. One of those of course is replacing the GST. Reducing red tape and the burden that is on small business as it relates to red tape and harmonizing federal and provincial regulations are just some of the things that I find to be extremely important to creating the right environment for our business sector to flourish.

Such federal initiatives are a breath of fresh air to our small business community and something that I wait anxiously for in order that we can start creating the jobs. The small business sector is the key and what we as parliamentarians should not lose sight of if we are to see this economy start to grow.

Other measures such as changes to the social security system and new job training strategies for young people are essential to changing the fundamental structures in this country that will help lead the way to practical training for people entering our workforce. An expanding small and medium sized business sector needs a talented and appropriately trained workforce.

I am confident federal spending on innovative training programs will help accommodate this objective.

Realistic job oriented training, better financial, technological and information resources for small business are essential to building a strong economy in my region and across the country. However, to take advantage of these enhanced resources for small business my region in particular needs the very basic of infrastructure networks.

I feel we are on the right track with spending on the infrastructure projects. Not only are we creating jobs to jump-start the economy, small that it is, we are also providing the basic foundation for a competitive national economy. Basic infrastructure involves roads, buildings, transportation and water and sewer services.

Supply

(2010)

I invite the members of this House to come and visit northwestern Ontario. Members will truly be impressed with the beauty of our natural surroundings, our forests, lakes and our famous sunsets. I am sure they will enjoy their visit. I am also sure that discerning individuals with attention to economic development will witness certain inadequacies in infrastructure.

They will see that our highways still need improvements. Some members will be dissatisfied that they cannot travel to certain areas simply because there are no roads at all. Some members will see and be surprised that growing municipalities do not have adequate sewer and water treatment facilities. One or two visits to First Nations communities will likely leave members disenchanted with current conditions.

The federal infrastructure works program speaks to these conditions. But I emphasize that northwestern Ontario and other regions in Canada need improved infrastructure. The north, remote areas of my riding such as First Nations communities, require basic infrastructure such as roads to open up economic opportunities. A road network where there is currently nothing will create the opportunities for trade within the region as a starting block.

Further road links such as the highway I have talked about in this House on many occasions from Red Lake in my riding to Winnipeg, which I have been requesting for some time and more reasonable air transportation connections, will then lead to enhanced trade outside of the region.

This trade will not only be in goods and commodities but also people themselves. Although tourism is a strong component of economic development in my riding there remains many untapped opportunities mainly because of poor transportation infrastructure.

Finally, I return to where I started, the resource sector. First I would like to comment on the mining industry which as most people are aware is a struggling industry in Canada. It is encouraging that the federal budget makes contributions to trust funds for mine reclamation tax deductible. This deduction will help mining companies utilize cash flow for other operating costs as well as making it convenient to ensure mine sites are rehabilitated after operations cease.

Certainly market trends have not been favourable recently for the mining sector in Canada. That is why it is all the more important for this government to seriously consider tax incentives or other measures to help stimulate mining activity. We need to encourage grassroots exploration and investment in Canadian based mineral companies.

I understand the Minister of Finance is open to the concept of mining incentives and I look forward to contributing to the process of renewing this policy.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that environmental guidelines for the mining industry are necessary and it is our responsibility to protect the environment. However, the procedures in place are convoluted and confusing, resulting in unnecessary delays to legitimate mine start-ups. As a result we are losing mineral investment dollars to foreign nations.

We must stop this leakage and support mining projects in Canada by established, concise and efficient environmental assessment procedures. We can protect the environment and ensure mining operations are safe without frightening away investment due to red tape and uncertainty from within the bureaucracy.

I can say from talking to the Minister of the Environment and the understanding that I have within the government that we are now in the process of dealing with that very difficult and complex issue of duplication of environmental policy across the country. I hope to be able to stand up here very soon and share in the announcement of this government that we now have one process for mines, one process for forestry, one process for Canadians as it relates to the environmental assessment process and not have to spin our wheels going from one department to the next, municipal, provincial, federal and God only knows wherever else we have to go before we can get economic development within our regions.

Second, I would like to directly address the forest industry in Canada which is by far the primary economic activity in my riding. The federal government as we all know does not have direct jurisdiction over forestry practices. The federal government instead contributes to research and scientific development through federal-provincial forestry development agreements.

(2015)

I feel it is the federal government's responsibility and should remain an eminent priority to lend as much support as possible to the development of sustainable forestry practices. A viable and environmentally responsible forestry sector will provide a launching board for the growth of diversified businesses in northwestern Ontario and other forestry regions.

In the estimates there are many things involved, as I have talked about, relating to forestry and mining. It is so obvious to those of us who have been around this House for awhile, the opposition, where I was before this Parliament, that it is very easy to stand up and pick one or two issues to criticize the government on. I hope the members opposite get the opportunity to be on the government side, as some of them have. It would be of benefit to not hold their breath, but if in fact it were their wish to get the opportunity to create policy they would look at initiatives like this in a very favourable light as I have.

Coming from a region that is one-fifth of Ontario, almost the size of the Atlantic provinces put together, that fits in my riding, people have to understand that there is tremendous potential for economic growth given the right kind of policies. These are the policies that I am trying to relate tonight.

I want to conclude by saying that there are many decisions reflected in the budget estimates which hold promise for me and a renewed and vibrant future within the small business community which I talked about extensively in my speech.

Although I have expressed concerns for northern infrastructure and certain resource sectors, I want to stress again, as I have said to my colleagues opposite, that I am confident that if this government does not do what the previous government did, and that is lose its way and forget why we are here and why the people put us here, we will put the kind of policies in place that even the members opposite will cheer.

I know the member for Beaver River will stand up and cheer with me as she has done on numerous occasion when we were in opposition and did get our way on occasion.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, now that my name has been mentioned I feel I should stand up and say something.

I do appreciate the hon. member's comments. I realize what a huge geographic area he has to represent. He is quite right when he states that we did sit together for some months or even years I think at the beginning of the last Parliament, and I did appreciate that.

I want to address a couple of things which he talked about. We in the Reform Party caucus said that we have one or two areas that we want to cut. Let me make it very plain that we would only start with one or two areas. There are dozens and dozens of areas in all of these main estimates that need to be cut; not just that it is a good idea, but it is absolutely necessary. Only then will forestry, mines and all these other things be able to take first place, as they should.

However, if there is no money left in the federal coffers then there is going to be nothing to help out any sort of social programs that the member needs in his area. We know that there are certain things absolutely necessary there.

If we focus on one part of the red book and not on the other part of the red book in which he refers to and the Liberals always refer to the fact that we need to cut spending to make sure that there is money available, we are not just talking about one or two areas that we need to cut but dozens and dozens in order to save those social nets and in order to make sure that programs and policies in his constituency are going to go ahead.

Supply

With the debt rate going up at an incredible rate of thousands and thousands of dollars every minute that will do more to harm any social programs or any forestry or mines or infrastructure programs that are going on his riding. Perhaps he could respond to that.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, I am much better in debate than I am at making speeches. I appreciate that the member would entice me to get involved in the debate.

One of the things that concerns me about the Reform Party's continued approach of the zero in three, which was part of its main plank in its campaign, that it could reduce the deficit in three years, is the fact that Canadians did not believe it.

(2020)

If in fact they did believe the Reform Party, it would be sitting over here and I would be sitting over there. Let us face it, there are times when members in the opposition, when members of Parliament continue to suggest things that may appear to be a good political tool to get governments to react to certain issues. We lay down the facts and give the numbers as the Reform has done. I am one of those who has read the direction you would like to go as far as reducing the deficit in three years.

For example, if it reduced \$20 billion, which is what it suggested roughly during the campaign, if you take the very conservative estimate of a reduction of a billion in an export economy, a billion dollars relates to 15,000 jobs of reduced activity per billion. It does not take a rocket scientist, as has been mentioned on the opposite side, to figure out how many jobs would be lost if we reduced that quickly out of an economy that is used to having \$20 billion creating economic activity.

What I am suggesting is that we would not have 11 per cent unemployment, we would probably have somewhere in the neighbourhood of 17, 18 per cent unemployment.

I am a history buff and my colleague who sits on the committee opposite me will know that in the thirties there was a Conservative by the name of Bennett who tried the same thing, who used the approach that the quicker you slash everything the quicker you will get more economic activity. He drove the economy of Canada right into the ground completely within a period of three or four years. He said: "It is an international recession, we cannot do anything about it".

My understanding, and the history books will prove this, is that as soon as the Liberal government came back in after Mr. Bennett and reversed those programs, the economy took off and we started to make money again, people started to pay taxes and we started to pay our debt off.

That is the only issue that I am relating to members on the opposite side. People do not believe that if you were in gov-

Supply

ernment you could reduce this massive deficit that we inherited in three years. You should stop kidding yourselves about that.

The issue is we believe that a balanced approach is a better approach. We were elected on that platform. We are going to reduce the deficit. We are going to make some very tough choices. I want to suggest to the member from Beaver River, if I am mistaken, and I would hope that my colleagues will back me up, you will be one of those who will be very happy to see the next budget in February of next year when we will be making more severe cuts to make sure that when we get our fiscal house in order it is done in a very balanced and structured way.

That is why you have to negotiate with the provinces and not do as our friend Brian Mulroney did and say to the provinces it really does not matter what they think, this is what we are going to do. We know how many seats the Conservatives have.

The opposition members should stop suggesting to Canadians that the zero in three is the way to go, because it is not. Nobody believes it. As a member I know that it will not work and they should revamp that strategy.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in hearing the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River attempting math. Math is a very precise science and I know that our zero in three got us from one to 52. That was in five years, but give us another four years and there may be very few opposition members in this House when the Reform Party forms the government.

It is interesting that the hon. member's own finance minister indicated that by reducing unemployment insurance premiums, a type of tax, jobs would be created. How can the hon. member then suggest that by cutting government spending we would be reducing jobs rather than creating jobs? He is not exactly lining up with some of the logic or the math of his finance minister.

I have a young family and I am quite concerned about taking this national credit card that we have and continually running up a debt, year after year, deficit after deficit, to the point at which we are over half a trillion dollars in debt, and then at the end of my life presenting that credit card to my kids and asking them to pay it off.

(2025)

I notice that the hon. member is approximately the same age as I am. I expect that he either has some similar concerns or knows friends who have similar concerns. I wonder how he can justify running up this debt for his children.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, that is somewhat of an insult since I am much younger than the member who just spoke.

My family is so young, not even a year old. During the campaign I ran against a Reformer and it was a very enjoyable experience, I might add. One of the things that gentleman said over and over again is that government is wasteful and we have to clean up the government and make sure that we tune it in right.

We know in this place, because we see the expenditures, that total government operations, everything that we do from RCMP to buildings we own across the country, are \$20 billion. The fact remains that we could shut the whole government down. The member talks about selling the odd jet and doing this and that.

This government is talking about a fundamental restructuring of the economy, fundamental changes in the right direction, not tinkering around with one jet or a limousine versus a Chrysler, or a Honda versus a Tempo. We do agree that there have to be significant changes and cuts. We are not arguing that.

Mr. Hermanson: That is what Mulroney said.

Mr. Nault: The member suggests that is what Mulroney said. What Mulroney said and did are two different things, as we all know. He played around on the fringes. He liked to play around and pretend he was making cuts while he sat there with 40 ministers along the benches. There were so many of them and so many limousines around they had trouble getting to their offices after question period.

We do not see that in this government. There is a dramatic change in how we do things and how the Prime Minister is trying to use a more common man approach because that is where he comes from. We do not have a presidential kind of atmosphere around here any more. We have a House of Commons attitude with which we are going to slowly work our way through this.

I have said to my constituents that we need, and what I think we are following as a government, is about a 10-year plan, not a 3-year plan in which we slash and trash everything that is not nailed down and then say: "I cut the deficit but everybody is out of a job, but are we ever doing good". What we want to do is build the economy over a 10-year period. I certainly believe that I will still be in this place if I am so fortunate as far as my constituents are concerned to prove to members opposite that we have done the right thing and have the right policies in place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before we resume debate I would like to take the opportunity to set the record straight.

Just before the member for Kenora—Rainy River spoke, at the same time the member for Fraser Valley West and the member for Kenora—Rainy River sought the floor. I gave an explanation at that time on why I came to the final decision to recognize the member for Kenora—Rainy River when in fact upon further verification with the table officers I have been made aware that my decision was not consistent with the

precedents of this House. In recognizing the hon. member for Fraser Valley West I also add my apologies.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see that the person in charge is always willing to admit an error from time to time. It is too bad the government in charge would not follow in line with that.

I had a great speech prepared tonight, but there have been so many quotes I have to address them and change everything.

The government whip talked previously about re-establishing our credibility. That was the comment he made. One wonders why the Liberal government has to re-establish its credibility rather than establish it. Could it be that this was the very government that started borrowing money on the backs of our youth in the first place and now it is back to try to re-establish credibility?

The question about why Reformers are in this House of Commons is quite obvious. The government did not quite re-establish the credibility it thought it did, and so here we are.

(2030)

There was some prior discussion about tabling a list. I think one of the members opposite suggested that one of our members did not have a list. He was referring to the list of restraint measures to be reflected in future estimates, the reductions from the House of Commons budget. That was the list he was referring to. I intend to put forward an amendment to the motion based on that list. It is not as though he were coming up with something out of thin air. It is not a list this government needs; it needs a conscience. This government has to do a little soul searching on how to balance budgets.

We are asked time and time again what specific cuts could be made. We divulged a great deal of cuts during the election. Nowhere in these estimates have we seen anything like reducing non-salaried items by a certain percentage, not even 2 per cent, not 3 per cent, not 10 or 12 per cent. If members look at some of the non-salaried issues in this government today it would not take very much to figure out there is some money to be saved. One wonders how hard they are looking.

I would like to get back to my old dilemma of how much we are spending to promote the official languages policy. The \$650 million we have established could be anywhere from \$650 million to \$2 billion or \$3 billion. No one is certain in this government. There are a lot of places to find cuts. It is just a matter of getting at it and doing it.

I have tried to put these reductions into the House of Commons budgets we are talking about here of about \$2.4 million. By the time we put this in perspective, it is interesting that in the period of a 20-minute speech we have already spent \$1,767,600 in interest on the debt. Here we are this evening debating probably ten times that amount.

Supply

Today the cost to our young people, each and every one of them, is about \$26,000 per annum to pay the interest. This is transferred to the young people listening and watching tonight. It is not this party that brought this upon these next few generations. It is the government of today and that previous party from Jurassic Park, wherever it is. I am sorry, I did not mean to point to the hon. member from the NDP. They are not Jurassic Park, yet.

There was a quote a little earlier from the government whip who said that we do not want to get into this discussion on a partisan basis. Unfortunately these discussions about dollars are partisan. They are biased. Many people are very angry at politicians and government. Reformers have come to this House in part to address some of those concerns people have. We have a right to speak about these things and we intend to do so with vigour.

Just imagine for a moment in any country in the world a government which spends \$160 billion a year. This factitious country overspends by \$40 billion a year. In other words the money it takes in just is not enough, so it borrows to spend \$40 billion a year. This government borrowing that much each year then says: "We want to get more jobs. We want to show people up front we are going to get them jobs. What will we do? We will buy them some jobs. Let us spend \$2 billion more, even though we are only borrowing \$40 billion. Let us borrow \$2 billion more and let us go to the municipalities and get them to throw in \$2 billion and why not ask the provincial government for \$2 billion as well. We have \$6 billion, but there is only one taxpayer. Fancy that". Here is a government borrowing on the backs of one taxpayer at three different levels of government. This is the same government which is spending \$160 billion a year, of which \$40 billion is borrowed.

(2035)

A member opposite said a little while ago: "If this government does not lose its way". I suggest this government has started to lose its way, it is on a different path than the day it started. It is already borrowing money to show politically it can create jobs when at the end of the day what is going to happen is there will be more people unemployed and we will owe more money.

Mr. Mitchell: The Canadian people voted for it.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The Canadian people voted the Conservatives out. They did not vote a red book in.

Government members say: "Why not spend \$6 billion of the taxpayers' money on infrastructure jobs? Let us find something else to spend our money on. After all we are only borrowing \$40 billion. Why not create 150,000 child care spaces if the economy goes to 3 per cent of GDP? That is a good idea, but we do not want to show the people out there that we are borrowing \$1.5 billion to do that. Therefore we will spend \$750 million federally and we will ask the provinces to spend \$750 million". Here we go again spending another \$1.5 billion on the backs of

Supply

the taxpayers. And it is in that silly red book if you do not believe me.

Where is this government going as far as spending money? In actual fact it is spending \$3 billion more this year than last year. Yes, it has made some cuts. I am going to go through some of these cuts, but they are surface cuts and it has really not touched the problem at all.

By the way, I should not forget to mention it did give about \$3 million to the Prime Minister's riding to help build a museum of industry. I think there was another \$33 million given to Quebec City for a conference centre. So maybe the government is looking at cutting back somewhere somehow.

What do you say to a government that comes up with estimates and we debate them when in fact it is spending more money than it should? How does one get excited about discussing estimates? Why is it that we have not had a reduction in the estimates in the last 20 years? Just what is wrong with governments in this day and age, in particular this federal government? What is wrong with these folks that they do not understand that people want them to cut back, not spend more?

The government is cutting some surface things and spending more on other things. It is amazing how these governments continue year after year to justify their existence and justify the spending of more money.

We are the directors of Canada corporation. All 295 members are the directors. If you were a director of any corporation and you said to your shareholders: "Well we sort of overspent this year but it is only \$40 billion. Next year we are going to overspend by \$30 billion", what would the reaction be of the shareholders? I suggest that in private industry, in the real world out there, the directors would not be directors any longer. And this government sanctimoniously stands up and talks about cutting \$2.4 million? It is not really a cut. Surface spending is all it is.

Changes have been made in some of the House of Commons expenditures. Why is it that it might be seen as a vote of non-confidence if the estimates were more reflective of that fact? What we have asked for is to have these estimates amended and sent back.

I am going to go through some of the changes as the government whip did. However, I am going to put another side to the story because the warm fuzzies that were presented are not so warm at all. In fact, even some of these small cuts would not have happened had the Reform Party not been here. We pushed this government to make cuts in all of its perks and it still came up with some surface stuff.

(2040)

The suggestion has been made that we give ourselves too much credit, but we probably do not give ourselves enough. We will give ourselves more credit when we oust that motley crew.

Let us look at some of the reductions. It was talked about that we are going to save approximately 15 per cent of \$98,000 and what is that on? The shoeshine service has been eliminated. The number of the barbers has been reduced from three to one. I am not a fan of barbers, as you might have guessed. However the facts are it is really despicable that any government would have the unmitigated gall to stand in this House and say: "We have done you a favour, Canadians. We have cut back on three barbers to one and on the shoeshine service". It is despicable and there is no other word for it.

However the government did save on the messenger service and some office renovations. As I say, the whole list of savings the government whip talked about amounts to just a little more than 20 minutes' worth of interest on our debt. I do not know how you can get in this House and really talk high on something like that. The people of this country should be ashamed of what is going on here.

I notice that we did leave something in the House of Commons budget. There are all kinds of things in there. Let us talk about the \$9.2 million it cost for information services. It is still in there. You know what that is besides a PR exercise. It is more paperwork than Mount Baker which is very close to my riding. If you piled the paperwork up in this place you could probably build a small mountain out of it. It would not take a brain surgeon, as my colleague from Wild Rose says, to figure out there is a lot more money to cut in here. To throw some of these little numbers out as government is doing is really incredible.

I could go on about many of the costs in here, but there is a point to be made. This government has not got the idea yet that Canadians by and large, regardless of their political affiliation are looking for significant reductions, a sign that government is in control of itself. Two separate Auditor General reports said specifically that the government is out of control financially. I would be one who concurs with that and I think the greater number of Canadians agree. In fact I probably would guess even people who vote Liberal might think that, although the people they elected seem to have walked away with a different philosophy.

The bottom line is that we do want a change. We are desperate for a change. This country is going broke. We have to stop borrowing money. We have to stop the facade that it is okay to spend more of taxpayers' borrowed money to show people that there is a little blip in employment. That just will not do in the long run.

Supply

In line with that, I would like to move the following amendment to the motion:

That the motion be amended by deleting the amount of \$164,985,000 and substituting \$162,514,000.

That amendment reflects the fact there were some commitments on behalf of this government to make some changes. That is the list my colleague was referring to earlier.

(2045)

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member opposite for all the information, but I am not sure we really gained much.

He mentioned that we on this side of the House might like to re-establish our credibility. That was certainly re-established on the date of the election. I certainly notice in the polls from the west that we are doing very well in an area represented by a very regional party.

Our party has established confidence in the country. Confidence is something that we need. Certainly many of his constituents are very much more in favour of where we are headed today. There is a lot of confidence in the oil patch in the west. Prairie grain producers recognize what our ministers are doing and what we are doing around the world to protect the interests of our people. Things are certainly looking much better.

In Ontario small business is feeling better. Small business is starting to hire. The major employer in my riding is Goodyear Canada, the most modern tire plant in the world. It has just hired a few more people. It has gone over the 700 mark. It is investing in eastern Ontario and is shipping to auto manufacturers in Quebec, in western Ontario and right into Michigan. Its tires are being shipped all over North America. Why did Goodyear build a new modern plant in eastern Ontario? It is because it believes in the country.

The other day I was in the northern part of my riding. Georgia Pacific, one of the largest lumber companies in North America, has just invested several million dollars in a GP waferboard plant. Money is coming from the States and it is to hire 85 people next month. Certainly there is confidence there.

Our party is not like the party opposite. We do not want to cut the legs off the working people. We want everybody to be able to go to work.

You mentioned a \$26,000 debt per person. Let me ask you: How many people in North America—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. I have been seized by the member's enthusiasm, but I remind all colleagues to address their colleagues opposite through the Chair.

Mr. McCormick: I would like to ask a question of the hon. member opposite. How many people in the world today would like to pay \$26,000 or \$50,000 and be able to move into this country? The world has recognized that we are living in the world's greatest spot. Many people would like to move here tomorrow.

The member opposite mentioned infrastructure.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Was that my question?

Mr. McCormick: The member will get his question. I want to let him know that infrastructure is an investment in the country. We believe in Canadians and we invest for tomorrow.

Does the member opposite believe he would like to cut at random affecting the lives of innocent people? Does the member opposite not believe in investing in tomorrow? Does the member opposite not believe in Canadians?

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, there were three questions. I will back to the first one.

The member opposite talked about how the Liberal government had established confidence in the people of the country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): They are clapping, I say to those who cannot hear it.

(2050)

Let me just cite a couple of things that have not established any particular amount of confidence, some things that I have tripped over lately. The government gives CPP, old age security, the old age security income supplement and GST rebates to criminals in prisons. Does that give a lot of confidence to people out there? I have received hundreds, if not thousands, of telephone calls from senior citizens across the country since we divulged that. Does that give people confidence?

Our people are overtaxed. Does that give people confidence? The Young Offenders Act so weak that it is just a plain, poor job. I do not know where the confidence is coming from. It is not oozing from my riding. Perhaps it is somewhere along the line.

There was a question about \$26,000 per person. To have the unmitigated gall to justify that debt to our young people because they would like to live in the country is pretty poor justification indeed. It is future generations that we have to try to help. Because we live in such a great country does not justify Liberal borrowing at all or borrowing by the other party from Jurassic Park.

The final question was whether or not we could justify cutting at random. We produced during the election zero in three. We justified it. For a new party with 52 elected people, a lot of people understood it. The reason why the zero in three does not quite work right now and we have to amend it is that the debt

Supply

charges have risen so high. The government refuses to cut back on its budgets. What are we stuck with? Now we have to go with a higher number of zero in something.

It is a shame the government cannot understand what the people want. It will not take the bull by the horns.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I go back to the issue my colleague raised as it relates to infrastructure.

There seems to be an underlying motive in the Reform Party's attitude that money should not be spent on infrastructure because they are part time jobs and that when there is a debt, the money should not be spent or used toward the development of infrastructure.

Even though we have financial and fiscal problems—we all admit it; we are not suggesting otherwise—his party is suggesting that we should not bother with infrastructure in regions like mine which of course are huge. There are 800,000 square kilometres with virtually no roads that have tremendous potential, as I mentioned before.

Should we hold off on trying to develop regions like that until some day when we may be able to get our debt back to zero? It is going to take a significant amount of time if we are reasonable about it. I need to know from the member whether he is suggesting that we should put everything on hold and let infrastructure crumble and fall apart as is the case in other countries around the world.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I think we have to go back a way on this one. We are in debt. It is so hard to get it through over there. We are borrowing \$40 billion a year. The reason there are no roads or some infrastructure is breaking down in the first place is that we have been borrowing money on the backs of the taxpayers for years. They do not have it through their skulls yet that they have borrowed, borrowed and borrowed. We cannot afford these programs any longer.

I might add that I talked to several mayors about the infrastructure program. Basically in many cases, and I am not suggesting all of them, there may be some areas that require purposeful funding for infrastructure. In some cases the mayors said that these were jobs they were going to do in the first place. Their costs have been cut. Instead of having 100 per cent infrastructure costs coming out of the residential taxpayer dollar, the provincial government will pick up some and the federal government will pick up some.

(2055)

All the government has succeeded in doing is borrowing more money on the backs of the taxpayers. That is the philosophy we have here. It is smoke and mirrors.

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak on this most auspicious occasion, the debate on the first main estimates of the government.

Other members have talked about how the government has demonstrated its resolve to restore order to Canada's fiscal house. I would like to talk about another pledge that we made to Canadians: to provide government services that Canadians want and need in an affordable and efficient manner. We promised to work to eliminate overlap and duplication with other levels of government and to ensure that the Canadian taxpayer is not paying twice for the same or similar services.

The government is very serious about keeping these pledges and about restoring the faith of Canadians in their government institutions. It is equally serious about ensuring that a public service that has been cut repeatedly over the last 10 years is still able to deliver quality, responsive services to their clients.

I would like to talk about some of the many management initiatives of the government that will enable us to keep our promises to Canadians. As the February budget announced, the government will release a declaration of quality service by the end of the summer. This declaration will be a service scheme for all public servants to follow. It will describe what the government views as good government service. It will tell Canadians what kind of service and treatment they can expect to receive when they telephone a government number, visit a federal office or write to a government agency.

This declaration will provide clear direction to all public service employees about the kind of service the government wants Canadians to receive from all federal offices. While we may not be able to deliver all services in line with the declaration right now, an achievable but challenging target is one way of getting there.

The declaration is only one part of the government's plan to tell Canadians what they can expect when they use a government service. It will be a broad government-wide vision of quality service.

Just as important as the declaration are the service standards that each department and agency of government are expected to produce. Service standards will build on the quality pledge included in this declaration and go even further. Written in plain language they describe the particular services and programs of each department. They will talk about the actual level of service that Canadians should expect to receive, such as how long before the telephone is answered, applications are processed or letters are responded to. They will include some measures of the cost of the service or program so Canadians can judge if they are getting value for money.

Finally, service standards will include simple, easy to use complaint mechanisms so Canadians have an effective avenue of redress if they are not satisfied with the service they are receiving.

Service standards should be developed in consultation with the program's clients and employees. The government believes consultation with Canadians is an important step in restoring faith in federal institutions. To this end we are determined to develop an effective consultation process.

By talking to the people who actually use or deliver the service, government managers get a better idea of what is most important to their clients. When asked clients generally offer worthwhile suggestions on how the service could be improved. By finding out what Canadians value, government managers can concentrate their energies and efforts where the return in terms of increased client satisfaction is the greatest. They can use the information to eliminate or reduce services that no longer meet the needs of today's clients.

Service standards are real. Mr. Speaker, when you filed your income taxes this year you will have noticed in the guide the declaration of taxpayers' rights. This is not new. What was new was a statement by the department that even at the height of income tax processing in April and May returns can normally be processed and cheques or assessments returned within four weeks. This gives Canadians a very concrete idea of what they can expect.

(2100)

Enquiries Canada, part of the Canada Communication Group, has a number of service standards in place. For example, phone calls are answered, with a bilingual greeting I might add, in three rings or 16 seconds 85 per cent of the time. Any inquiry requiring further research is answered by the research team within 24 hours and the research officers do the callbacks to the clients themselves.

Correspondence received by Enquiries Canada is answered within 48 hours.

As we can see, this is a real and concrete description of the services that are being offered, something Canadians can monitor to see if the organizations are continuing to meet these targets.

The inspections branch of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has developed draft standards that are based on consultation with clients and staff. One set deals with how the department will handle complaints. Complaints involving health and safety of fish products will be investigated immediately. Trade complaints or complaints involving quality or consumer fraud will be investigated within three working days.

This is an example of how the department is becoming more sensitive to the service needs of its clients.

Supply

My final example of the service standards comes from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The department has established a single access food labelling service for the Canadian food industry. The service consolidated food labelling activities involving the former departments of consumer and corporate affairs and agriculture under four different pieces of legislation. The new service will complete a label assessment within 10 working days.

These are all examples where federal departments and agencies have clearly spelled out for Canadians the level of service they can expect to receive. We can monitor their performance and see if they are meeting their targets. We can discuss their targets with them. For the first time we will know what response we should expect from a government department or agency.

Of course, developing service standards is only one step in more efficiently delivering effective and affordable programs. One way to really improve the services that Canadians are receiving is to eliminate the stovepipe mentality resulting from separate government departments. Based on clients' perspective, related services from a number of departments and agencies can be provided in one location. That is what the Canada Business Service Centre concept is all about, one stop shopping for the business client.

CBSCs provide a comprehensive access point for information, assistance and referrals on all federal programs and services to business.

In the last budget this government made a commitment to open at least one centre in a major urban area in each province this year. Furthermore, we are working with the provinces and the private sector to develop a single access point for federal, provincial and community-based programs and services of interest to business clients.

Clients have access to CBSC services by telephone and facsimile transmission, in person and in future electronically from home or business. Aside from some start-up funds to offset technology investment, CBSCs are being established within existing operating resources.

Since these estimates were tabled on February 24 the Canada-B.C. Business Service Centre has officially opened, this in addition to three CBSCs in Halifax, Edmonton and Winnipeg which have been up and running for some time. Four new centres will open in the early summer in Montreal, Fredericton, St. John's and Charlottetown. Most of these will operate in conjunction with provincial services and one will even have the participation of the local chamber of commerce. The remaining centres will open in the early fall.

Harmonizing federal and provincial services in one location is a giant step forward. However, it is even more important to determine that the programs and services that we are delivering are still relevant to the needs of today's Canadians. To that end, the budget announced a series of program reviews. The most

Supply

fundamental and far reaching of these is the government's review of Canada's social security system.

The Minister for Human Resources Development is leading this review. He has already launched a dialogue with Canadians and the provinces on our social security system. The entire range of social programs and issues will be covered in this review. They include unemployment insurance, training and other employment programs, the Canada assistance plan, security for families and children, assistance for persons with disabilities, post-secondary education and student loans.

(2105)

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development will begin consultations on the action plan in the very near future. Members of this House will be invited to undertake their own consultations.

Redesigning services and programs to meet the real needs of Canadians is absolutely imperative to ensure that the most valued services and programs are delivered efficiently and affordably. However, it is just as important that public servants are ready and equipped to deliver these services.

As part of this broader re-engineering effort, the government released the blueprint for renewing government services using information technology. The blueprint contains a vision of how the government can use today's information technology to deliver responsive and affordable services. It identifies the need for a government wide electronic information infrastructure to support service delivery renewal.

The common infrastructure will allow the development of knowledgeable employees free from organizational constraints and able to answer questions and deal with the programs of a number of federal governments.

The blueprint is one of many approaches to advancing the one-stop shopping concept and eliminating the stovepipe attributable to government organizations.

The government is taking other measures to ensure that taxpayers' money is spent wisely, with true consideration given to real need. For example, with the introduction of operating budgets managers were provided with one sum of money to cover employee costs and operating and maintenance costs. This eliminated the person year control system. This person year control system often acted as a barrier to improving services to Canadians by not allowing managers to achieve the right input mix of staff, services and equipment.

To cut down on the wasteful year end spending practices that we often read about in the Auditor General's annual reports, departments were allowed to carry forward from one fiscal year to the next 2 per cent of their operating budgets. There was therefore no need to rush out and purchase computers or lab

equipment that departments did not need right away but knew they were going to need in the next fiscal year.

This government is currently evaluating whether the 2 per cent carry forward has been effective in eliminating the so-called year end spending binge or whether it needs to be increased to 5 per cent. I am confident that the President of the Treasury Board will advise us of the results of this study in due course.

Departments and agencies that are closely located are starting to share common services like meeting rooms, libraries, internal mail distribution, to free resources that have been used in this kind of duplicative and costly overhead. To date there are over 200 such initiatives being discussed or implemented in every province across the country.

We are streamlining and updating our payments and procurement processes through the use of modern technology. This will have tremendous benefits both in terms of cost avoidance and in terms of better service to those firms that want to sell goods and services to the government.

In conclusion, let me assure hon. members of this House that the government intends to keep its pledge to deliver the services Canadians want and need in an affordable and efficient manner.

I have talked today about a number of management initiatives the government is pursuing. The list is just a start. It is just a beginning. As we look at how we are serving Canadians and delivering our programs, as we continually strive to learn and improve, other such initiatives will follow.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's comments. I would like to ask a question related to the infrastructure program.

Canadians will remember that recently the United Nations had a study which said that Canada was number one in the world to live. However, if you looked more closely at that study, when the status of women in Canada was factored in Canada dropped to ninth place of the most favourable to live in the world. The same study also cited that women's net income is 51.5 per cent of that of men in Canada which is one of the reasons that we scored so low in terms of the status of women in Canada.

(2110)

The infrastructure program was certainly in our jobs plan. The New Democratic Party supported having an infrastructure program. We think it is very important.

It is true however that the majority of jobs in that infrastructure plan will provide jobs for men. I think this is good. I am not suggesting that we should not be doing that but I would like to ask the member if in his government's plans, in his own looking into the infrastructure program or other employment programs, he would both support and perhaps give some examples of how the Liberal government has directly decided to address the very serious issue of poverty among women and increasing

unemployment among women which is reducing the standard of living for women in Canada.

Mr. Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. I certainly concur that we are very committed to helping the status of women and certainly through a number of initiatives that we have come forward with we will certainly be doing that.

I have gone into my riding and talked on many occasions in high schools, encouraging young women to get involved in science and technology programs, indicating to them that this is the future. We need to rely on training and providing incentives to women to participate in science and technology and certainly to give them opportunities both in the private and public sector to display the skills they have.

Certainly the Liberal government is committed to providing opportunities for women both through this infrastructure and in all other areas.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, there are two different kinds of infrastructure. One is the physical infrastructure of roads and sewerage systems and so on which are very important to the development of Canada. There is another kind of infrastructure program and that is our social infrastructure.

I would like to ask the member about that aspect of infrastructure because his government said in its election promises that when growth in the economy reached 3 per cent it would institute a national child care program.

This would provide I am sure quality child care for many children who are without it in Canada. It would also provide a number of jobs for people working in that sector. Can the member comment on that given that growth in the economy is now projected to be over 3 per cent in this year.

Mr. Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the hon. member has read the red book and has read our commitments. Certainly as a Liberal Party we are going to meet our commitments.

The national child care program we are certainly committed to is outlined in the red book and that would be once the economy reaches 3 per cent. I understand that we would actually be initiating that one year after the growth in the economy.

We certainly do support the national child care program and we would be implementing this program one year after the economy reaches that 3 per cent growth.

Supply

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I know that a number of members still want to speak on several of these items that are left and that the time for debate will end in one hour. Therefore I would like to see if there is unanimous consent to cut the speeches to 10 minutes with no questions or comments from anyone, thus permitting more members on all sides of the House equally as per usual formula to get on.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to put that proposition to the House and seek such consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the suggestion of the government deputy whip. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

(2115)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We are resuming debate on the amendment by the member for Fraser Valley West to Motion No. 2.

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to speak on full supply for the 1994–95 main estimates.

Many of us are participating in the consideration of the main estimates which are prepared in support of the government's appropriation bill for the first time. I would like to take this opportunity to summarize for members the significant features of the 1994–95 main estimates and to describe the relationship between these estimates and the government's expenditure plan which was presented in the February 1994 budget.

The 1994–95 main estimates set out details of \$160.7 billion of planned government spending. This represents a decrease of 0.2 per cent over the 1993–94 main estimates. It is important to note that almost 70 per cent of the \$160.7 billion has been authorized by Parliament through substantive legislation. These statutory expenditures in the amount of \$112.2 billion include the following: major federal government social transfers to Canadians, including old age security, guaranteed income supplements, spouse's allowance and unemployment insurance benefits, transfers to provinces under the fiscal equalization program, transfers to the provinces for health, post-secondary education and social assistance and public debt charges.

Therefore through these estimates the government is seeking Parliament's approval to spend \$48.6 billion for those programs which rely on annual appropriations. Planned expenditures for these voted programs represent a decrease of \$330 million or 0.7 per cent from 1993–94.

What is the relationship between these main estimates in the amount of \$160.7 billion and the total budgetary expenditure forecast in the amount of \$163.6 billion projected in the February 1994 budget? Allow me first to identify those items which

Supply

are included, followed by a description of items we were unable to include for various reasons.

As the member for Dauphin—Swan River, I am pleased to note that the 1994–95 main estimates incorporate a number of significant expenditures reductions set out in the February 1994 budget which amount to \$1.2 billion. These savings are comprised of reductions in areas such as operating budgets, \$400 million; ministerial offices, \$13 million; defence, \$350 million; cancellation of the EH-101 helicopter program, \$395 million; and international assistance, \$91 million.

These reductions clearly demonstrate the government's ability to follow through on its plans and policies to restore fiscal responsibility. We are keeping our word.

Items not included which total \$2.9 billion essentially fall into three categories: adjustments, reserves and allowances for lapses. With reference to adjustments, some elements of the planned spending could not be incorporated in the main estimates because of the timing of the budget decisions or because they depend on the passage of separate legislation.

However, let me reaffirm the government's intention to deliver on the fundamental policy reforms and expenditure reduction measures involved. Major items in this category, all of which are decreases, announced in the February 1994 budget and not reflected in the 1994–95 main estimates include: changes to the unemployment insurance program, \$725 million; reductions in subsidies to businesses, \$117 million; reductions in non-statutory grants and contributions, \$45 million; suspension of annual salary increments for public service employees, \$50 million; and a reduction in the House of Commons budget, \$5 million. The total savings anticipated from these adjustments in 1994 are \$942 million.

(2120)

The second item which was provided for in the expenditure plan of the Minister of Finance but not included in the main estimates is reserves. Reserves are excluded from the main estimates because they are used to meet spending requirements which cannot be detailed but are likely to arise during the year and appear as supplementary estimates.

Supplementary estimates A, which were tabled in the House of Commons on May 27, 1994, are an example of the use of reserves, in this case to allow the government to deliver the Atlantic groundfish strategy. Reserves in the 1994–95 estimates amount to \$4.7 billion.

The third and final item which was included in the total budgetary expenditure forecast presented by the Minister of Finance but not included in these estimates is the provision for an anticipated lapse of \$875 million in spending authority; that is, spending authority that will not be exercised by departments and agencies.

Lapses can occur due to many factors which are difficult to predict, ranging from contractual delays with outside parties to weather induced delays on construction projects.

Thus far in discussing these main estimates I have focused entirely on the significant features of the government's planned spending and direct budgetary action to reduce expenditures. In addition, I would draw members' attention to the fact that main estimates documents also contain information on numerous initiatives which the government has under way to improve service delivery to Canadians and to make government more efficient. Highlights of these initiatives are provided in part I, chapter 5 of the main estimates.

Improving service delivery to Canadians can be accomplished without increasing expenditures through greater co-operation with other levels of government, redesigning service delivery mechanisms and establishing a regulatory regime that encourages competitiveness and economic growth.

For example, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal is co-ordinating and steering a process to examine overlap and duplication and to clarify federal-provincial roles and responsibilities through co-operative intergovernmental arrangements.

The federal government has invited the provinces to examine such areas as securities regulations, environmental assessment regulations, food inspection, access to government business programs and services, student aid administration, drug prosecutions, social housing and labour market programs.

Another initiative designed to improve service delivery to Canadians is the establishment of Canada business service centres. CBSCs provide a comprehensive access point for information, assistance and referrals on all government programs and service to businesses. CBSCs are also intended to improve co-ordination and co-operation among federal departments and agencies that offer programs and services that interest or effect the business community. Aside from start-up funding to offset technology investments, CBSCs are being established without new operating resources.

In conclusion, as the member for Dauphin—Swan River, I would note that the 1994–95 main estimates reflect the government's resolve to implement measures which it believes are necessary to restore fiscal responsibility while remaining responsive and innovative to ensure quality and efficiency in public services.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): On a point of order, the hon. government deputy whip.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, there have been further consultations among the parties in the House and I think if you were to seek it you might find that there is unanimous consent to have 10-minute speeches and five minutes questions and comments starting right now so that we could accommodate more members on both sides of the House to participate in this important debate.

(2125)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the terms of the motion, the suggestion by the government deputy whip. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's comments on the main estimates.

[*Translation*]

I would like to ask her a question about the cuts in the budget, and especially in the social programs envelope. As the hon. member said, the budget contains a number of cuts, especially in unemployment insurance, and in fact more than 50 per cent of the cuts in the budget affect social programs.

Does the hon. member agree with these cuts in social programs, especially when they attack the unemployed instead of attacking unemployment?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cowling: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

I should remind the hon. member that we are going through a process of review for the social security programs and it will be up to the people of this country to make that decision. We are listening through that consultation process and I am assured that the people of Canada will tell us what they believe is the right thing to do with respect to social programs.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, to my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River, I am very much interested in issues that relate to the expenditures in the estimates and the budget.

Mr. Speaker, you will understand this being of the same bent, in the old hockey days I used to play in Dauphin. Dauphin is a small community very much the same as Kenora and places in my riding like Kenora, Dryden and Fort Frances. The thing that impressed me the most was the agricultural land that was available for production.

One thing in this budget the member could fill us in on is the issue of whether the government is listening regarding farmers. Farmers have had a very difficult time in the last few years. As I do not have a large agricultural sector and am not well versed in agricultural issues, I would like to know if she could tell me if we are on the right track as it relates to agricultural issues. Are there initiatives in the budget that she thinks are going to help the farmers in her area and across the west?

Supply

Mrs. Cowling: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question with respect to agriculture.

I want to assure the hon. member that for those of us who come to this House from a farming background, we have a number of issues around agriculture that are going to keep farm families in this country alive and well. I would like to mention a few of those.

One is the whole farm support program. I believe that the hon. minister of agriculture should be congratulated for taking the incentive to listen to farm families through a consultation process again and bringing forward those issues which are dear and near to the hearts of farm families.

(2130)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate in this debate tonight and to make a few comments, a few well-researched comments I might add. I have had a lot of time to prepare.

I listened with interest to a number of members who spoke earlier this evening. I was particularly concerned and tried to respond earlier in the form of a question and comment to Reform Party members who had been talking in the context of their remarks about the confidence convention in the House. I am very glad to have this opportunity to pick up where I left off at one point earlier.

I wanted to say and had an opportunity to partially say to Reform Party members that they should be a bit more humble about the whole tradition of advocating more free votes, less party discipline and less respect for the confidence convention in this House. I ask them to be cognizant of the fact that the special committee on reform of the House of Commons which was struck after the 1984 election and which was chaired by the Hon. Jim McGrath made a number of recommendations along the very lines the Reform Party members are in the habit of getting up and suggesting to the House.

I would suggest to my Reform Party colleagues that they read the McGrath report, if they have not already. Maybe some of them have. In there they will find recommendations about the confidence convention, about party discipline, about free votes. What they will find is a recommendation that there be a wider range of issues on which members of Parliament should feel freer to vote their conscience, or that of their constituents, or whatever they want to do, but that they not be bound by party discipline.

We received a lot of advice at that time from eminent constitutional and parliamentary scholars, like the late Eugene Forsey and others, that the confidence convention is given far too much weight in the Canadian political tradition. Even in the mother of Parliaments at Westminster will be found many more examples of backbench members of Parliament on the gov-

Supply

ernment side for instance, voting against government measures. It means that the cabinet and the Prime Minister have to be much more sensitive to backbench opinion and that is a good thing.

I also want to say to Reform Party members that with respect to the rules of the House there is nothing more left to be done. As a result of the McGrath committee report all the technical language of confidence was taken out of the standing orders.

Prior to 1985, the word “confidence” did appear in the standing orders with respect to allotted days, supply days, et cetera. What that committee recommended was that all the language of confidence be taken out of the standing orders so that from that day forward nothing would be technically or procedurally a matter of confidence. The only things that would be matters of confidence would be things that were declared at the political level by the government to be matters of confidence.

There is nothing in the rules of the House of Commons at this point that prevents the government or any other political party from having free votes. It is all a matter of the culture of the particular government or the political party. As members will have noticed even among themselves this is a difficult thing to overcome.

As far as I know even the Reform Party itself has tended to vote as a party. You tend to have similar positions, but when you do not there should be the freedom to express the variety of opinion that exists within the caucus, particularly on the government side. I say that because it is harder on the government. There is no reason on earth why government should regard everything as a matter of confidence.

What the McGrath committee recommended was that unless the government explicitly declares something to be a matter of confidence, it is not. It is a matter of political culture in the final analysis. It is not a matter of procedure. It is not a matter of rules. It is related to the media and how they treat division within parties, et cetera. It is a question of trying to change our attitude around here. Procedurally we can lead the horse to water but we cannot make it drink. It has to drink by itself.

The government has to drink from the river of diversity within its own ranks, just as other political parties do, and that takes courage. It takes courage on the part of political leaders and it takes courage on the part of political backbenchers no matter what party they belong to.

In the final analysis, there is not a member of Parliament here who is not free to get up and vote differently than his party or his leader, or her party or her leader, any time they want.

(2135)

Therefore I think there is a mistake in approach on the part of my Reform colleagues who keep insisting there is something the government must do. There is nothing the government could do. All the government needs to do is to set its own members free. There is nothing procedurally or legislatively or anything like that that needs to be done.

It is not clear when they are speaking. I am not making this up. Their argument sounds as if there is something the government should be doing. The thing they could do best, if they are really serious about this, is to demonstrate it in their own practices.

I just wanted Reformers to know that this call for less party discipline, for more distance from the confidence convention and for less domination by parties in the House of Commons precedes their arrival. I am sure it goes back a long time. It goes back to the non-partisan movements of the 1920s and 1930s to the Progressive Party and various other things. But its most recent incarnation here happened in the 1980s as a result of the McGrath committee report. Even before that there was the Lefebvre committee which was chaired by the late Senator Tom Lefebvre when he was a member of this House. That committee made recommendations on this.

There has been progress. When you come here as a member, you think things as they are are the way they have always been, but prior to 1985 we could not even vote on private members' bills unless there was unanimous consent. There are a variety of other ways in which individual members have been given more power to express themselves as individuals, not just in private members' business but in committees.

Prior to 1985 a committee could only study what the government asked it to study. Committees had no independent power to decide to study this or that. If I had the time I could go on and list a number of other things. I just say this because there is, I would say, a certain kind of hubris on the part of my Reform colleagues that there were no parliamentary reformers before they arrived.

There have been reforms and there have been a lot of us who have been advocating these kinds of reforms partially successfully and partially without success. Let us carry on, but let us not act as if nothing happened before we got here.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona's comments with interest and I agreed with very much of what he said. In fact his own party was born from a reform tradition. We in the Reform Party have made many comments about Canada's reform tradition not only in western Canada but in the province of Quebec, at that time it was Upper Canada. Even in Atlantic Canada there were some Reform movements that have sprung up.

The problem is not the fact of understanding what reform is all about and the changes that need to be made. I think we all understand that. We even understand, in spite of what the hon. member said, that some changes have been proposed and adopted by this House that would relax the confidence convention. However, the Prime Minister has not seemed to relay that message to his caucus and that is what concerns us.

We have seen the same problem in provincial legislatures. In fact, provincial legislatures which are governed by the hon. member's party, the NDP, exercise extremely strict party discipline.

One other matter that needs to be clear, and I would like to get the hon. member's comment on, is that we are not talking about free votes as being free spirited endeavours on behalf of individual members. We are talking about the members' freedom to vote the wishes of their constituents. There is quite a difference between voting how I might feel I should vote as an individual and in fact voting the wishes of my constituents.

We in Reform have not come here and promoted just a bunch of free spirits voting however they please on every issue. We have been talking about difficult or divisive issues where in fact the party's position may differ from that of a member's constituents. I am sure it happens on the government side where the government has proposed legislation which individual member's constituents are definitely opposed to.

We know what happened in the last House with the GST where members were told not to support the GST and they came into this House and stood with the government on the GST. Through their hands they said to their constituents: "You don't count. We don't care what you say. We have to vote with the government", even though these reforms apparently were in place.

(2140)

The matter is not that the reforms are not there to be used. The problem is in acting them out in this House. I would ask the hon. member to respond to that and in fact even with regard to the provincial legislature where his party is the governing party.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I said that I thought Canadian politics was dominated too much by party discipline. I mean that as an across the board comment.

I would point out to the member that there is a free vote in the Ontario legislature tonight sponsored by an NDP government. It is a counter example to what the member is saying. But I agree. When the McGrath committee recommended that there be a broader range of issues on which people should feel free of party discipline it meant that for all parties. When I signed that report I meant that for all parties.

Supply

With respect to the other issue the member raised—I see you rising, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the House would just allow me to respond to the final point about what is the role of members of Parliament when we are freed up from party discipline. Are we then freed up from party discipline to vote our conscience, or to vote with the majority of our constituents, or perhaps they might overlap, or perhaps they might be in conflict.

It is a much more complicated matter than what Reform members tend to argue is the case because they argue that it is a question of respecting the majority view of their constituents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I regret the hon. member's time of five minutes for questions and comments has expired. Is the hon. member asking for unanimous consent? Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The question is on the amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the nays have it.

Pursuant to the order adopted earlier today the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until later this day at 10 p.m. at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-5, an act to incorporate the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 135(2) the bill is deemed to have been read the first time and ordered for second reading at the next sitting of the House.

*Supply***SUPPLY**

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 30—TRANSPORT

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved:

That Vote 30, in the amount of \$330,938,000 under the heading Transport—Payments to Via Rail Canada Inc., in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995 (less the amount voted in interim supply), be concurred in.

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the opposition has raised this matter for debate. As all members know there are many pressing issues facing the railway industry and Canada is at a crossroads with respect to the industry's future.

Before dealing specifically with VIA I would like to put the rail passenger services into the larger context of the national transportation system. The hon. Minister of Transport set out a clear vision for the government's national transportation policy on June 3 in Thunder Bay.

Obviously transportation is as important now as it was in the past. We need a realistic achievable vision, and new partnerships to move the Canadian transportation system into the 21st century. We should respect the past but by doing so we must meet the challenges of the future.

We believe that the role and structure of crown corporations such as VIA Rail and CN must be reviewed. Because of the current uncertainty in the rail sector and concerns over its long term viability, the Minister of Transport intends to convene a meeting of industry leaders to discuss the problems railroads are facing and to search for solutions.

(2145)

We must be pragmatic and focus on what will work. We must ensure that the common sense realistic needs and affordability are among the criteria driving Canadian transportation policy of the future. Passengers must have a multimodal transportation system that is safe, reliable and affordable. VIA has a role to play as we put the system in place.

Because of the need to reduce the government expenditures VIA has been required to operate within lower funding levels. Notwithstanding the fact that the funding to VIA has been reduced and its network restructured in 1990 we now have a streamlined and more efficient rail passenger carrier. The corporation has been able to complete cost studies of its operations that show where opportunities exist to make cost effective changes. Identification of such opportunities prompted VIA for example to introduce new service frequencies in the Montreal—Ottawa triangle while reducing further its requirements for government subsidies.

The government is pleased with what the corporation has been able to accomplish with the introduction of its silver and blue service on the western transcontinental trains. Public response has been outstanding. With both revenue and traffic increasing, on time performance is now at 90 per cent.

VIA has demonstrated that it is capable of meeting the challenge of subsidy reductions. That has been accomplished with the use of better equipment, improved productivity and a quality of on board services.

Recent years have seen VIA management exercising greater flexibility and control over the planning, development and operation of rail passenger services. With our government that trend will continue.

The 1993 budget reduced VIA funding over a three year period beginning in 1994–95 from \$343.4 million to \$235 million in 1996–97. The recent budget exercise further reduced annual funding over the next five years by a total of \$9.6 million.

As my colleague, the Minister of Finance, has already told the House, Canada has been building up a mountain of debt. We simply cannot allow this trend to continue. This was the reason behind our decision to confirm the VIA funding levels announced in the 1993 budget. VIA has met its challenges in moving to a more efficient customer oriented company.

This government is now asking the corporation to assist the government in reducing our national deficit. VIA's ability to meet this challenge is fundamental to its long term viability. The government's decision to confirm VIA's reduced funding was a necessary one and the right one for Canada. We cannot put the decision aside and look to the past. In my opinion that would be the wrong course. Rather we must now look to the future and forward building on VIA's successes.

There has been much discussion concerning the level of government subsidy to passenger rail service. In particular comparisons have been made with other modes of public transportation in Canada: buses, aeroplanes and the automobile. While the automobile and air modes have received more funding overall, each passenger on the rail mode receives a far greater subsidy than any other mode of transport.

Since its creation in 1977 the government has spent more than \$7 billion on VIA's operating and capital expenditures. Despite these government subsidies rail passenger service retains only 1 per cent of the total Canadian intercity passenger traffic. In comparison the air mode has a market share of 6 per cent. The automobile enjoys the lion's share of the market at 89 per cent. Even the bus mode enjoys a greater share of the market at 4 per cent.

These figures reveal that Canadians have a definite preference for passenger modes other than rail and they have sent a clear signal of that preference.

Supply

Like all Canadians we must ask ourselves what is it that we can afford. We must make choices based upon utility and value. We cannot say to Canadians: "You must continue to pay more and more for something you rarely use".

I would encourage the opposition to recognize that we must face the reality of our economy, of our modes of travel, in particular the cost and benefits of rail passenger service.

If I may, I would like now to address the issue of where VIA is today. At the outset it would be helpful to briefly review some of the facts on VIA's performances in 1992. For the system as a whole the operating subsidy was \$332 million. This translates into an average total subsidy of \$92 per passenger. For the corridor, the most heavily travelled segment of the network, the operating subsidy was \$171.8 million for an average subsidy of \$56 per passenger.

(2150)

As we move to the other categories of service we see that the level of subsidy rises dramatically. For example, it rises from an average of \$254 per passenger for Trent Continental service to \$454 per passenger for services to the remote communities.

It is also interesting to look at the level of cost recovery. It ranges from a high of 38 per cent on the corridor to a low of only 8 per cent on the remote routes. Nevertheless, VIA has not stood still since the 1993 budget announcement. To help meet the funding targets it embarked on a major restructuring of its corporate and management expenses last November. We as a government must respect the taxpayers' ability to pay. That is an important first step.

Unfortunately, with even bigger streamlining and a pared down corporate structure VIA cannot achieve viability unless at the same time it addresses its cost base. For example, labour costs represent approximately 46 per cent of the corporation's operating costs. These are in fact the largest single cost items in VIA's budget.

The decisions facing both VIA and its labour unions in the current contract negotiations will be difficult. At the same time it will be necessary for them to work together to find a resolution of their differences which is within the final financial constraints.

VIA is currently evaluating the effect on its operations of the budget funding cuts. As well, the negotiations between VIA and its employees will have a significant impact on future levels of service.

In addition, the corporation is reviewing every aspect of its operations to maximize all expenditures which do not impact directly on services to the travelling public.

In conclusion, I believe it is important to tell this House and Canadian taxpayers, who are in fact funding VIA to the tune of

\$323 million this year, that a resolution and a solution can be found. It lies within VIA itself coming up with some additional efficiency gains and the workers and labour components of VIA working co-operatively with the company to ensure greater efficiencies. Passengers and the travelling public who have a great desire for using passenger rail service—at least that is what they tell us—at the same time jump in their cars and drive down the 401. Ninety per cent of passengers do that.

I think the solution for passenger rail service, and there is no doubt that there is one in this country, lies with the passengers utilizing VIA more, the labour component part helping, and VIA looking for greater efficiencies. We believe that we can have a viable affordable passenger rail service in this country.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member and his comments on the importance of rail and the decreased utilization of rail in this country.

I think we should put this into perspective. Following the changes to the rail system, to VIA Rail, we cannot on the one hand chastise people for not using rail when in fact the service and the funding to that service have been radically decreased and the quality of the service not upgraded. Certainly the proposals that have been around for quite some time on a high-speed train in the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal corridor clearly would serve a very important transportation service both for passengers and produce.

I was recently in Japan. While I realize there is a much larger population there, their high speed trains are utilized fully because it is a good service.

Certainly the whole question of transportation is a major one. One of the debates during the Canada-U.S. and NAFTA free trade agreements was the impact on transportation, a further north-south investment into transportation routes of all kinds as opposed to the east-west links which had provided to the regions of this country, our farming communities and communities in the maritimes and Newfoundland, a substantial part of the development of this country.

(2155)

I appreciate the member's comments specific to VIA Rail as it is now, but would it not make more sense from the environmental and utilization of best technology points of view to look seriously at a high speed-train in large quarters with large population?

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, the question is very appropriate. The member will know that the three governments, the federal government, the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec, have spent \$6 million on a further study of the high-speed proposal. That high speed proposal will come before the House and before the government some time this summer, at which point the House and the government will have an opportunity to

Supply

look at the viability of high-speed trains through the corridor from Windsor to Quebec and Montreal.

We believe there could be a future for high-speed trains in the country provided there is a willingness for the partners to work toward that resolution, the partners being the provinces, communities, other modes of travel and the private sector investing greatly in infrastructure which may cost somewhere between \$8 billion and \$10 billion.

The member is right that the European communities and Japan have decided to go the route of high-speed trains. We believe this country should look at those opportunities, but we will have to await the report for that to happen.

Let me say another thing about VIA. The member is right that the Conservative government slashed services some three years ago but the ridership has come back. I can only say that it is not a question of whether we will have VIA in the future but what it is we can afford. I will give one example. A person can purchase a ticket from VIA for \$78 to go between Jasper and Prince Rupert. The subsidy for that one passenger for that one trip is \$701 to the Canadian taxpayer.

We believe we can have a viable passenger rail service, but we need to look to the communities, to passengers, to the labour and to VIA to come up with a viable and affordable system.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, this is a very historic evening. Twenty years ago the House decided that it would change an estimate, and it changed two estimates. One was with regard to the Department of Labour wherein it cut \$19,000. The other was a \$1,000 cut to the president of the CBC. Those two cuts were accepted by the House at that time.

Based on that I should like to move an amendment before the House based on the same principle. If we can repeat history tonight I think we will have achieved success. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the amount \$330,938,000 and substituting \$330,918,000.

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the proposer of the amendment. We acknowledge that VIA has done its part, but I am not sure how the member came up with this magic \$20,000.

Is he suggesting that we cut service to his riding or any particular riding? Is that the contribution the Reform Party wishes to make to the subsidy? If that is what the Reform Party stands for, less passenger rail service in this country, perhaps the member can explain that.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, I think he understands. He has been long enough in this Parliament to understand that is not the kind of rationale, the reason put in place by people who are responsible members of Parliament. That kind of argument is for people who want to argue in the gutter, who want to debate the issue outside the

House in an arena that does not earn the respect of this Parliament.

It is very unfortunate what the hon. member has just done. If it takes a reduction in some expenditure in the constituency of Lethbridge of \$20,000 to symbolize a very important change where we are going to reduce the budget, then the people of Lethbridge would be willing to accept that responsibility.

I know this member will not be making that decision. I know the members of this government, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, would make a rational, reasonable, priority, responsible decision on a matter such as that and it would not be done in a crass manner. That is why I can accept that responsibility on behalf of my constituents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 10 p.m. it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The House will now proceed to the division on Motion No. 1. Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 52)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Berger
Bethel
Blondin—Andrew
Bonin
Bélair
Calder
Cannis
Chamberlain
Clancy
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
Dingwall
Duhamel
Easter
English
Flis
Gagliano
Galloway
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Keyes
Knutson
Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maheu
Maloney

Arseneault
Assadourian
Baker
Barnes
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Bodnar
Boudria
Caccia
Campbell
Catterall
Chan
Cohen
Coppes
Crawford
DeVillers
Discepola
Dupuy
Eggleton
Finlay
Fontana
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Ifody
Jackson
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Loney
MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)

Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney
Milliken
Minna
Murphy
Nault
O'Reilly
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Robichaud
Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons
Speller
Steckle
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Valeri
Walker
Wells
Wood
Zed—139

McCormick
McKinnon
McTeague
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peters
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette—Maltais
Rompkey
Serré
Sheridan
Skoke
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan
Young

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Asseline
Bellehumeur
Bernier (Gaspé)
Blaikie
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
Bélisle
Caron
Cummins
de Savoye
Dubé
Dumas
Fillion
Gagnon (Québec)
Gilmour
Grey (Beaver River)
Guay
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner
Kerpan
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mercier
Mills (Red Deer)
Ménard
Paré
Pomerleau
Ramsay
Sauvageau
Solomon
St-Laurent
Strahl
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
White (Fraser Valley West)
Williams—93

Ablonczy
Bachand
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bouchard
Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Davault
Deshaies
Duceppe
Epp
Frazer
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin
Grubel
Guimond
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Johnston
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Marchand
Mayfield
McLaughlin
Meredith
Morrison
Nunez
Penon
Péloquin
Rocheleau
Schmidt
Speaker
Stinson
Taylor
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne
White (North Vancouver)

Supply

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

Adams
Dalphond—Gural
Gerrard
Marchi
Stewart (Northumberland)

Crête
Debien
Jacob
Rock
de Jong

(2240)

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on the amendment to Motion No. 2.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 53)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Epp
Gilmour
Grubel
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Johnston
Manning
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Ramsay
Speaker
Strahl
White (Fraser Valley West)
Williams—41

Ablonczy
Bridgman
Cummins
Frazer
Grey (Beaver River)
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner
Kerpan
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Penon
Schmidt
Stinson
Thompson
White (North Vancouver)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Assad
Asselin
Bachand
Bakopoulos
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bethel
Blaikie
Bodnar
Bouchard
Brien
Bélisle
Calder
Cannis
Caron
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cohen
Copps
Crawford
Davault
Deshaies

Arseneault
Assadourian
Augustine
Baker
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Berger
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Blondin—Andrew
Bonin
Boudria
Bélair
Caccia
Campbell
Canuel
Catterall
Chan
Clancy
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
de Savoye
DeVillers

Supply

Dingwall	Discepolo
Dubé	Duceppe
Duhamel	Dumas
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Fillion	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gagnon (Québec)	Galloway
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Keyes
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lebel	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Lincoln
Loney	Loubier
MacDonald	MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)
Maheu	Malhi
Maloney	Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLaughlin
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mercier
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Ménard
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Paré	Patry
Peric	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Pomerleau	Proud
Péloquin	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringuette—Maltais
Robichaud	Rocheleau
Rompkey	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Skoke
Solomon	Speller
St-Laurent	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Szabo	Taylor
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Venne
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
Wood	Young
Zed—191	

(2250)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the amendment negatived. The next question is on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The next question is on the amendment to Motion No. 3.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the last vote on this motion in reverse.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the terms. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify with the government whip. Is he sure he means in reverse? It is the motion of the hon. member for Fraser Valley West with respect to Parliament. Now it is the motion of the hon. member for Lethbridge with respect to VIA Rail. My understanding is that we would want the same vote. Am I mistaken? It is not in reverse.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I understand from the negotiations we had that the vote we were to take is on the amendment to the motion. Therefore the government side is voting against the amendment. That is why I said in reverse of the vote that we took before. If I made a mistake at this hour, maybe there is confusion. Maybe we should take the vote.

Some hon. members: No.

(2255)

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, to avoid confusion I think you would find there is unanimous consent to apply the second vote that was taken, that is, the vote on the previous amendment to a motion, not on a main motion, to this particular vote on this particular amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The next vote is on Motion No. 3.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Addams	Crête
Dalphond—Guiral	Debien
Gerrard	Jacob
Marchi	Rock
Stewart (Northumberland)	de Jong

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Let us try again and maybe this time we will get it straight.

I believe and I would like to ask my colleagues to check their voting lists, that the results of the vote on the first motion, the first vote we took that now because of the results of the vote we could apply the first vote to all the remaining concurrence motions, second reading of the bill, concurrence and report stage, third reading of the bill and all the clauses of the committee of the whole should be adopted on division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it agreed?

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am sorry but that was not my understanding. I was waiting for the whip to get up after this particular motion. If we were to do what he suggests, we would end up voting in a way we do not wish to vote, so I cannot agree.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I understand what the hon. member is saying. What happened was that on the first vote the Reform did not vote the way we were told they would vote. That is why we could apply the first vote to the other five votes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I think we could apply the results of the first vote to this one, and the hon. member could apply the same reasoning to the two votes on which they want to vote differently from the series of votes on which we will vote. Our agreement still stands, provided he makes it clear that a negative vote on the fifth vote applies to all votes except two. If he says which two, there is no problem.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to have been able to predict what the Reform Party would do, or for that matter the government whip.

Whatever is going on here, Mr. Speaker, I just want it to be absolutely clear that the NDP caucus wants to support the motion of the Treasury Board allocating money to VIA Rail and to Industry grants. Then we want to be recorded as voting against the main estimates in their entirety.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The votes described by the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona will be recorded according to his statement.

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 53.*]

Supply

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 54*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Arseneault
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bellemare
Berger	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin—Andrew
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Bélair
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chan	Clancy
Cohen	Collins
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
DeVillers	Dingwall
Discepola	Duhamel
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gallaway
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Keyes
Kirkby	Knudson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	Lincoln
Loney	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)	Maheu
Malhi	Maloney
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLaughlin
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringuette—Maltais
Robichaud	Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Skoke
Solomon	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Szabo
Taylor	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
Wood	Young
Zed—143	

Supply

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bouchard	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Bélisle
Canuel	Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Cummins
Daviault	de Savoye
Deshaies	Dubé
Duceppe	Dumas
Epp	Fillion
Frazer	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gilmour
Godin	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Guay
Guimond	Hangar
Hanrahan	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Harris
Hart	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Johnston	Kerpan
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Manning
Marchand	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mercier	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Ménard	Nunez
Paré	Penson
Pomerleau	Péloquin
Ramsay	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Speaker	St-Laurent
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Venne
White (Fraser Valley West)	White (North Vancouver)
Williams—89	

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Adams	Crête
Dalphond—Guiral	Debien
Gerrard	Jacob
Marchi	Rock
Stewart (Northumberland)	de Jong

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 10—INDUSTRY

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved:

That Vote 10, in the amount of \$729,747,000 under the heading Industry—Industry and Science Development Program—Grants and Contributions, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995 be concurred in.

(The House divided on Vote 10, which was agreed to on the following division:)

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 52.*]

CONCURRENCE IN MAIN ESTIMATES

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved:

That the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, except any vote disposed of earlier today and less the amounts voted in interim supply be concurred in.

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

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 52.*]

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A)

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved:

That the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal period ending March 31, 1995 be concurred in.

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

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 52.*]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved that Bill C-39, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1995 be read the first time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know, as is usually done in these proceedings, whether the bill is in the usual form.

[*English*]

Mr. Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, the form of this bill is the same as has been in past and previous years.

(Bill deemed read the first time.)

(Bill deemed read the second time, deemed considered in committee, deemed reported, deemed read the third time and passed.)

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 52.*]

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify for the record that the Reform Party was indeed opposed to all the estimates because we believe fiscal spending by the government has to be brought under control.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 11.03 p.m. this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11.03 p.m.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Portugal Week

Mr. Ianno 4983

Collège militaire royal in Saint-Jean

Mr. Bachand 4983

Kemano Completion Project

Mr. Gilmour 4983

Riding Forum

Mr. Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury) 4983

Literacy

Mr. O'Brien 4984

Juliette Catelani Corsini

Mrs. Bakopanos 4984

Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario

Mr. Asselin 4984

Betty Larke

Mr. Hoepfner 4984

Oceans Day

Mr. Caccia 4985

University of Guelph

Mrs. Chamberlain 4985

National Transportation Week

Mr. Wood 4985

Status of Women

Mrs. Gagnon (Québec) 4985

Teledemocracy

Mr. White (North Vancouver) 4985

Gasoline Prices

Mr. Solomon 4986

Democracy

Mr. Discepola 4986

Oceans Day

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso) 4986

Canadian Special Service Medal

Mr. Hanger 4986

Education

Mr. Keyes 4987

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Job Creation

Mr. Bouchard 4987

Ms. Copps 4987

Mr. Bouchard 4987

Ms. Copps 4987

Mr. Bouchard 4987

Ms. Copps 4987

Collège militaire royal in Saint-Jean

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval) 4988

Mr. Massé	4988
Mr. Gauthier (Roberval)	4988
Mr. Massé	4988

Arms Sales

Mr. Manning	4988
Mr. Chan	4988
Mr. Manning	4988
Mr. Chan	4988
Mr. Manning	4988
Mr. Flis	4989

Canadian Radio–Television and Telecommunications Commission

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	4989
Mr. Dupuy	4989
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	4989
Mr. Dupuy	4989

Finance

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	4989
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	4989
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	4989
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	4989

CRTC

Mr. Fillion	4989
Mr. Dupuy	4990
Mr. Fillion	4990
Mr. Dupuy	4990

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Mr. White (North Vancouver)	4990
Ms. Copps	4990
Mr. White (North Vancouver)	4990
Ms. Copps	4990

CRTC

Mr. Pomerleau	4990
---------------------	------

Mr. Dupuy	4990
Mr. Pomerleau	4991
Mr. Dupuy	4991

Grain Transportation

Mr. Easter	4991
Mr. Goodale	4991

Pearson International Airport

Mr. Harris	4991
Mr. Young	4991
Mr. Harris	4991
Mr. Young	4991

Social Housing

Mrs. Guay	4991
Mr. Young	4992
Mrs. Guay	4992
Mr. Young	4992

Writing Thru Race Conference

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast)	4992
Mr. Dupuy	4992
Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast)	4992
Mr. Dupuy	4992

China

Mr. Graham	4992
Mr. Chan	4992

Double Hulled Ships

Mr. Sauvageau	4993
Mr. Young	4993
Mr. Sauvageau	4993
Ms. Copps	4993

Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	4993
--	------

Mr. Eggleton	4993
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	4993
Mr. Eggleton	4993

National Forum on Health

Ms. McLaughlin	4994
Ms. Copps	4994

Agriculture

Mr. Collins	4994
Mr. Goodale	4994

Presence in the Gallery

The Speaker	4994
-------------------	------

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Milliken	4994
--------------------	------

Western Grain Transportation

Mr. Goodale	4994
Mr. Marchand	4996
Mr. Kerpan	4996

Committees of the House

Environment and Sustainable Development

Mr. Caccia	4997
------------------	------

Finance

Mr. Discepola	4997
---------------------	------

Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Milliken	4997
--------------------	------

Auditor General Act

Bill C-257. Motions for introduction and first reading deemed adopted	4997
---	------

Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) 4997

Petitions

Mr. Hanger 4998
Motion 4998
(Motion agreed to.) 4998

House of Commons

Mr. Milliken 4998
Motion 4998
(Motion agreed to.) 4998

Committees of the House

Human Rights and Status of Disabled Persons

Mr. Milliken 4998
(Motion agreed to.) 4998

Petitions

Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia

Mr. Wappel 4998

Witness Protection

Mr. Wappel 4998

Human Rights

Mr. Wappel 4998

Serial Killer Cards

Mr. Peric 4998

Rights of the Unborn

Mr. Peric 4999

Human Rights

Mr. Peric 4999

Canada Post

Mr. Morrison 4999

Criminal Code

Mr. Morrison 4999

Assisted Suicide

Mr. Boudria 4999

Young Offenders Act

Mr. Boudria 4999

Serial Killer Board Game

Mr. Boudria 4999

Killer Cards

Mr. Shepherd 4999

Questions on the Order Paper

Motions for Papers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Main Estimates

Mr. Massé 5000

Motion for concurrence 5000

Mr. McWhinney 5000

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac) 5002

Mr. Boudria 5003

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) 5003

Mr. Boudria 5006

Mr. McWhinney 5007

Mr. Kerpan 5007

Mr. Sauvageau	5009
Mr. Collins	5009
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	5010
Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	5010
Mr. Milliken	5012
Mr. Laurin	5012
Mr. Milliken	5012
Mrs. Terrana	5014
Mr. Sauvageau	5015
Mr. Thompson	5017
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	5017
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	5018
Mr. Morrison	5019
Mr. Grubel	5019
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	5019
Mr. Dubé	5020
Mr. Williams	5021
Mr. Boudria	5022
Mr. Péroquin	5022
Mr. Blaikie	5023
Mr. Fillion	5024
Division deferred	5025

Concurrence in Vote 5—Parliament

Mr. Eggleton	5025
Motion for concurrence	5025
Mr. Gagliano	5025
Mr. Williams	5028
Mr. Gagliano	5030
Mr. Boudria	5030
Mr. Blaikie	5031
Ms. Catterall	5031
Mr. Thompson	5033
Mr. Morrison	5034
Mr. Nault	5034
Miss Grey	5037
Mr. Hermanson	5038
Mr. White (Fraser Valley West)	5039

Amendment	5041
Mr. McCormick	5041
Mr. Nault	5042
Mr. Valeri	5042
Ms. McLaughlin	5044
Mrs. Cowling	5045
Ms. McLaughlin	5047
Mr. Nault	5047
Mr. Blaikie	5047
Mr. Hermanson	5048
Division on amendment deferred	5049

Message from the Senate

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger)	5049
---------------------------------------	------

Supply

Concurrence in Vote 30—Transport

Motion	5050
Mr. Eggleton	5050
Mr. Fontana	5050
Ms. McLaughlin	5051
Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge)	5052
Amendment	5052
Mr. Fontana	5052
Motion No. 1 agreed to on division: Yeas, 139; Nays, 93	5053
Amendment negatived on division: Yeas, 41; Nays, 191.	5054
(Motion agreed to.)	5054

Concurrence in Vote 10—Industry

Mr. Eggleton	5056
Motion	5056

Concurrence in Main Estimates

Mr. Eggleton	5056
--------------------	------

Concurrence in Supplementary Estimates (A)

Mr. Eggleton	5056
--------------------	------

Bill C-39. First reading 5056
Mr. Eggleton 5056
Appendix 5056