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Friday, June 17, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 17, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION ACT

—Minister of Industry—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Industry of Bill C-43, an act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill C-43, an act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act and to make related amendments to other acts be referred forthwith to the Standing Committee on Industry.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the motion today is very simple and straightforward. The government wants to provide members of this House with a greater role in preparing legislation through House of Commons committees.

That was a commitment we made in the red book. We honour the commitment to give MPs a greater role today as part of the process of honouring another red book commitment, that of restoring public trust and confidence in the government's decision making process.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, the Prime Minister presented a comprehensive reform program, one component of which is the bill now before us today. The proposed amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act are based on two fundamental principles, principles which are shared by my colleagues in this House.

[*English*]

The first is that all Canadians have a right to approach their government without employing lobbyists. The second belief that forms the basis for the legislation before us is that lobbying must be transparent so that Canadians can have confidence that decisions are based upon merit.

It is with these principles in mind that the Prime Minister announced yesterday the creation of the position of ethics counsellor.

[*Translation*]

In the red book, we pledged that a Liberal government would appoint an ethics counsellor who would be available to advise lobbyists and their clients on how to do business with the federal government.

The ethics counsellor would also have the task of drafting a code of ethics for lobbyists which would define behaviour standards in the industry.

[*English*]

This bill gives the ethics counsellor the powers necessary to investigate lobbying activities contrary to the code. The counsellor will be able to report publicly on breaches of the code and will have the power to disclose publicly the fees charged by lobbyists in pursuit of government contracts where it is in the public interest to do so. This will provide a strong incentive for lobbying firms to abide by the spirit of openness and transparency that is at the heart of the reforms before us today.

The other reforms in the bill before us build upon the requirements in the Lobbyists Registration Act which came into effect in 1989.

(1010)

[*Translation*]

I would like to remind the House that last year, the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations studied the lobbying issue.

In June of 1993, committee members released a report entitled "A Blueprint for Transparency: Review of the Lobbyists Registration Act".

[*English*]

The committee's report concluded that the Lobbyists Registration Act did not reveal enough about the activities of lobbyists. The report made the case for the disclosure of additional information about lobbyists and their activities and those are the recommendations that have provided the basis for the amendments before us today.

The legislation provides greater transparency in four ways.

First, under the existing Lobbyists Registration Act lobbyists need to disclose only general subject matter. Under the new bill they will have to be very specific.

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Second, under the existing legislation lobbyists need not disclose to whom they will be talking. Under the new bill they will have to disclose what departments and governmental agencies they will contact.

Third, under the existing law lobbyists need not disclose how they intend to lobby. Under the new bill they will.

Fourth, under the existing law lobbyists who are employed by organizations such as associations and by companies need only provide their name and business address. Under the new law these in-house lobbyists would disclose the broad subject matter of the lobbying and detailed subject matter of their lobbying efforts, including the name of the legislative proposal, bill or resolution, policy, regulation, grant, contribution or other financial benefit and they would register the name of the departments or governmental agencies to be contacted.

[*Translation*]

The government has decided to maintain the distinction between consultant lobbyists and in-house lobbyists who work either for an organization or a corporation. We believe there is a major difference between these two types of lobbyists, both in terms of the nature of their activities and their status.

Consultant lobbyists work somewhat independently under contract on behalf of a client. Unless they file detailed returns on the nature of their client's interests, it is impossible to say that their activities are transparent.

[*English*]

Organization lobbyists, on the other hand, work for associations that are formed by their members to pursue their common objectives. The objectives of the associations are generally well publicized and in a similar way corporate lobbyists clearly and legitimately pursue their own company's interests. Most important, all lobbyists will be required to disclose both more information and information that is more meaningful than is now the case.

This legislation has gone a great distance to shed more light on the activities of all lobbyists so that Canadians can assure themselves the system is not being abused.

In this regard several proposed changes have been introduced to improve the administration and enforcement of the provisions of the act. The limitation period for laying charges in summary proceedings will be increased from the current six month period to two years to strengthen the RCMP's ability to enforce the act.

[*Translation*]

At the registrar's request, lobbyists will be required to clarify the information contained in the returns that they have filed. Lobbyists will also be allowed to file their returns electronically to avoid an unnecessary paper trail and to accelerate the disclosure process.

[*English*]

The first of our two principles, I would remind the House, is that all Canadians have a right to approach their government. They do not require lobbyists.

[*Translation*]

I hope that in the coming weeks, we will all benefit from the advice and counsel of Canadians who will be asked to present their views on this bill to the committee.

[*English*]

I look forward to hearing new ideas that the committee may propose and we are willing to amend this bill if it means providing a piece of legislation that will do more to earn the trust and confidence of Canadians in the decision making process.

(1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-43 comes within the comprehensive plan unveiled yesterday morning to restore the trust of the public in their institutions.

The bill focuses on lobbyists and thus, does not address issues pertaining to the code of conduct governing ministers and senior officials as well as parliamentarians. In that regard however, the Prime Minister indicated yesterday in his presentation that these issues will be dealt with in a subsequent bill.

The main elements of the bill are the following: first, lobbyists are required to disclose the specific subject-matter of their activities, the name of the government departments or institutions they will be lobbying, the communication techniques that will be used and, in certain cases, information about the true beneficiary of the lobbying.

Second, consultant lobbyists, that is to say those who work for lobbying firms, commonly referred to as professional lobbyists, are required to report this information for each new undertaking or contract, while in-house corporate and organizational lobbyists, those who work for large companies or interest groups, are required to report annually. Both tiers of lobbyists are required to report changes in this information within thirty days.

Third, the enactment allows lobbyists to file their returns electronically, sets the limitation period for enforcement proceedings at two years and provides for a Parliamentary review of the act in four years. The prescription period was extended to two years—from six months—with respect to proceedings before the counsellor, but this will be discussed later.

Finally, the enactment provides for the designation of an ethics counsellor who establishes a lobbyists' code of conduct and investigates alleged breaches of it.

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The Bloc supports the establishment of an ethics counsellor position and is satisfied with the powers of investigation vested in the counsellor. Although the Bloc agrees with the appointment of Howard Wilson, who is now Assistant Deputy Registrar General, it had hoped that future ethics counsellors would be appointed by the House of Commons.

The Bloc is therefore disappointed to see that the Liberals will make the appointment through an order of the Governor-in-Council. The counsellor is supposed to be a kind of guardian of integrity. Why would he not be accountable to Parliament for his actions?

On the contrary, Bill C-43 sort of makes him accountable to the Prime Minister who, as we know, has partisan interests, unlike Parliament. The other guardian of public integrity, the Chief Electoral Officer, is appointed through a resolution of the House of Commons. The Bloc thinks that the guardian of this institution's integrity should be chosen on the same basis.

Finally, in response to the argument that the leaders of the opposition parties were consulted before Mr. Wilson was appointed, yes, it is true that a letter sent by the Prime Minister to the Leader of the Official Opposition and to the leader of the Reform Party mentions Mr. Wilson's appointment, but it was not the main purpose of the letter.

The Bloc agrees that Mr. Wilson's first mandate should be to develop a conflict-of-interest code for lobbyists. It is, however, disappointed that the Liberal government refuses to give regulatory status to the yet-to-be-developed code, which would have made it more legally binding. In my opinion, since the ethics code is neither a statutory instrument nor an act of Parliament, it has the substance and consistency of a prayer, which I think will make lobbyists, who are not in the habit of worrying about minor considerations, feel morally entitled to circumvent prayers.

(1020)

Unfortunately, the Bloc would have liked the government to announce the end of tax deductions for lobbyists' fees, as the Minister of Transport suggested. This deduction means that taxpayers are indirectly financing the efforts of those trying to influence authorities.

Nowhere does the bill say that lobbying expenses or contracts will be made public. For the sake of openness, the public should have access to this information because it is very relevant for assessing what lobbyists do. At the very least, the bill could have provided that if there is an investigation, the counsellor should be required to make this amount public.

The bill has an attractive feature: disclosure of the means of communication used by the lobbyist. However, it is difficult for us to assess its significance at this stage. The regulations will surely make the scope of this provision clear. The bill also mentions electronic communication; it will favour communication by fax and other modern media. Regulations on these matters will follow.

To ensure greater transparency, as the Minister of Industry just said, the Liberal Party's position on the Lobbyists Registration Act, as stated on page 95 of the red book, is as follows: "To increase the transparency of the government's relations with lobbyists. . . a Liberal government will implement the. . . June 1993 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs respecting the Lobbyists Registration Act", known as the Holtmann report.

Among the main commitments of the Holtmann report, it said in Recommendation No. 1 that the distinction between Tier I lobbyists, who work for lobbying companies and are called consultant lobbyists in the new law, and Tier II lobbyists, who are paid employees of a corporation, for example, the vice-president of public relations at Bell Canada or another big corporation, should be eliminated.

In another recommendation, it said that the disclosure requirements should be the same for all lobbyists, in whatever category. Unfortunately, these recommendations were not followed and the dual system persists. These are major dilutions of the Holtmann report. How can you justify giving lobbyists for big corporations two months to file a return when consultant lobbyists must do so in 10 days? What is the rationale for such a distinction?

The Holtmann report also recommended that the Lobbyists Registration Act and the Lobbyists Registration Regulations be amended to force lobbyists to provide more details on the purpose of their efforts. More specifically, lobbyists should say whether their representations concern bills, amendments to acts, subsidies, contributions, regulations, policies, programs, contracts or legislative proposals. They should also mention who they are trying to influence and name the department responsible for the service concerned, as well as the office of the parliamentarian or organization contacted. That recommendation was also significantly watered down.

From now on, lobbyists, regardless of their category, will have to specify the purpose of their representations to the government. They will have to name which bill, proposal, legislation, resolution, regulations, program or subsidy is the object of their efforts. We notice that the government has listened to lobbyists representing major corporations and interest groups which can afford full-time lobbyists, and has maintained two tiers of lobbyists.

(1025)

The Bloc Quebecois nevertheless congratulates the government for having gone a little farther. However, we are under the impression that the Liberals are like fishermen who do not enjoy fishing. They go fishing but they do so reluctantly. If they make a good catch, it does not necessarily make them happy. It is unfortunate that we do not see any real political will and drive to put the emphasis on the activities performed by lobbyists. This may be the biggest reproach that we can level at the Liberals, who nevertheless deserve some praise for having gone a little

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farther, as I just said. By taking small steps from Parliament to Parliament, we may eventually reach our goal.

[*English*]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act.

The primary reason for changing the act is to ensure that decision making is done with transparency and under public scrutiny. We are trying to ensure that lobbyists are going to truly represent the people and not special interest groups. I applaud the government for making these changes to the Lobbyists Registration Act.

Historically, lobbyists have wielded enormous power. Their numbers are not insignificant; they have grown from over 800 two years ago to some 944 as of March of this year. They have often operated in a secretive fashion and not, I believe, in the best interests of the public. It is unfortunate their power has been so significant because they do not necessarily represent the silent majority this country has. It is something the people of Canada have often felt powerless to engage in.

These individuals run their agendas through government, often peddling their influence to certain groups. As I said before, it is not necessarily in the public interest that they prevail. It is wise to look at some of the changes this act provides.

The proposed legislation tabled today is aimed at restoring public confidence in the decision making process. As part of its commitment to ensure that members of Parliament are given a greater role in drafting legislation, the government intends to send this bill to committee before second reading as permitted under the standing orders. I applaud the government in doing this because it makes the process more open to all parties.

The proposed amendments would strengthen the Lobbyists Registration Act by increasing the transparency of lobbying activities directed at the federal government and by increasing the power of the newly employed ethics counsellor to investigate complaints about lobbying activities. The amendments follow the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations requiring all lobbyists to reveal more about their projects.

Consulting lobbyists who act on behalf of clients would be required to file more specific information of their undertakings. Right now they disclose only the general subject matter of their lobbying campaigns. Under this bill they would have to report the following: the specific subject matter of their lobbying efforts; the name of each department or government institution

to be contacted; the techniques they will use; and the true beneficiaries of their efforts.

Under the current act in-house lobbyists who work for companies or organizations need file only business card information. Under this bill they will be required to file once a year specific information including the following: a description of who their employer represents and the employer's lines of business; the specific subject matter of their lobbying efforts; the name of each department or government institution to be contacted; the techniques to be used; and the names of the employees who engage in lobbying.

All lobbyists would have to inform the registrar of lobbyists within 30 days of the termination or change of activity.

(1030)

Lobbyists that do not adhere to these rules can be found guilty of a criminal offence and fined up to \$25,000. It is interesting to note that these penalties are often missing in the lobbyists registration acts in the United States.

This act is a leader in North American and in first world nations because it gives some teeth to the act that are missing in other countries. It also provides for the ability of the RCMP to enforce the act.

The legislation tabled today also provides that the ethics counsellor would develop in consultation with the industry a lobbyists code of conduct and investigate complaints about lobbying activities that run counter to the code. It would also make a public report of the results of any investigation. These are all in keeping with the transparency I mentioned before and can only be applauded.

With the legislation the government intends to ensure that lobbyists cannot exercise the undue influence they have in the past. The primary reason for revamping the Lobbyists Registration Act will ensure, as I said before, that decision making is done with transparency and under public scrutiny. It will try to ensure that lobbyist representations are made very clear and the techniques they use are made very obvious to everyone concerned.

There are some amendments that we need to make. The new ethics counsellor is available to the Prime Minister to investigate cabinet ministers. We believe it should be the other way around. Instead the Prime Minister should be available to the ethics counsellor for these investigations. The reason behind it is that we feel the counsellor must be independent of political influence.

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Another point to be made is that government funding for lobby groups and special interest groups must stop. That is something we have continued to put forth as a party in the House and in the public for a long time. We believe it is very unfair for the public to be funding a special lobby group, a special interest group, that in many cases does not represent the true interests of the silent majority most of the time. I implore the government to take heed of this point. We have raised it before in the House. I also implore all government officials, particularly those of us who are new at the job, to be very wary of these groups.

One of the most difficult things I have found since being here is how to get to the truth of the matter, how to find out what the true answers are, what the people want and what the real problem is in definition. We are all in our offices subjected to large numbers of people from different groups who are giving us various points of view. Sometimes when we sit there listening to them we can be convinced that they represent the will of the people.

Being a sceptical individual I find it very difficult to believe that many individuals truly represent the truth, truly represent what our constituents want or truly represent the wishes of the silent majority. I would ask all of us in the House to be wary of that and try to continually ask ourselves what the majority of Canadian people feel about a specific issue. It is not an easy thing to do. It will be a continual battle for all of us to try to answer during our tenure.

I also implore members of the public to influence us where they can. We do not as a group want to be influenced by special interest groups. We need the influence of the silent majority in order to effectively represent the wishes of the majority of the people in the country. Only by the Canadian public coming to us to tell us what the average person on the street wants can we effectively and truly represent their wishes and do the best job we can.

I make an open plea to members of the Canadian public, if they are feeling apathetic, to try to influence us, to write to us and to give their wishes and views on what they want us to do here. That is the only way we can be forceful in terms of wishes. We are only as good as the constituents who influence us.

It is wise to summarize by looking at the underlying principles of the current legislation we want to promote such as openness. Records on paid lobbyists should be available publicly. There should be clarity to reinforce the principle of openness. There should be access to government by all people, not only lobbyist groups. The people on the street must have access to us freely, as the minister mentioned before. They must take advantage of that in a democratic society such as we have in the country. Not every country in the world has given the power to the people to do that. We are one of the few countries to have it.

I implore the people of Canada to come out and exercise their right to do so.

(1035)

We have a credo in our party. I ask all members of the House to please listen. We believe in the common sense of the people, their right to be consulted on public policy matters before major decisions are made, their right to govern themselves through truly representative and responsible institutions, and their right to directly initiate legislation for which substantial public support is demonstrated.

I hope the government will listen carefully, use them as guiding principles in its legislative efforts and institute and support efforts to democratize the system this party has presented, which I know many people in the House support.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I begin by saying that the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has raised a couple of very good points in terms of possible amendments.

The point he raised about government funding lobbyists is something we have to review. Many members find it strange that we fund heavily many lobbyists. In many cases the government funds them to constantly criticize even the good things governments are doing. Therefore, as the bill proceeds to committee, I know that part of it will be subjected to some good and rigorous exchanges in debate.

I also congratulate the Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry for taking the necessary time to bring before the House a comprehensive package. Often in our haste we could have maybe had the Lobbyists Registration Act amended and it might not have met the total test. By having a comprehensive package which includes an ethics counsellor, the Prime Minister has sensitized all of us who are public office holders and the entire machinery of government, as well as outside lobbyists. We will do our best to make sure the process of rebuilding trust is one that involves a constant, high profile, highly respected public servant who will keep us all alert to what tends to be the temptations to which the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca alluded.

Many people come into our offices at times. Sometimes it is difficult to judge where the real truth comes from. It is so easy in this game because sometimes the presentations to us as members of Parliament are so sophisticated and well organized that we end up buying in to some of the policies thrown at us. This will put a very vigorous discipline on us to make sure we get to the bottom of all information presented to us.

(1040)

I would like to highlight subclause 5(2)(i) which reads:

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where the individual has undertaken to communicate with a public office holder in an attempt to influence any matter described in subparagraphs 1(a)(i) to (vi), particulars to identify any communication technique that the individual has used or expects to use in an attempt to influence that matter;

That is a central point in the legislation and I say that from experience in the past Parliament. Often in the past we were not aware of the various techniques used by lobbyists. What are some of those techniques?

First, let us take the drug patent legislation as an example. That is a bill by which members can see the full force of a lobby at work. The organization of brand name manufacturers not only had very good lobbyists but used polling companies. It used advertising. It used print. It used the media. If we were not really sensitive to the total package or the comprehensive communication strategy they were using, we could be very susceptible to their particular lobby or their particular point of view.

Often in the House of Commons we are susceptible to polls because we have been conditioned as politicians to look at polls to find out what people are thinking. In the past we have seen lobbyists designing polls and using polls to create a sense that the public was supporting the presentation they were making to us on a particular issue. That is where we have to keep our heads up.

Mr. Speaker, you are a veteran of the Hill; you have been here for many years. You have seen these various techniques employed. The bill states that the technique lobbyists are using, whether it be print media or polling, the total package of how they will try to shift our attitude toward redrafting a piece of legislation, has to be on the table. Their operation has to be transparent in the way it comes at us. That is a key component of the legislation. It will help us make better laws for the people of Canada.

The Minister of Industry made another very important point in his speech: Canadians do not have to pay to talk to their members of Parliament. Millions of people would probably be shocked at the very thought of having to pay to speak to their members of Parliament.

The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca alluded to the fact that during the last 10 years the sector of the economy that grew the most in this town was the lobby sector. I do not know what the percentage increase was, but it outstripped every other sector in terms of growth in this city. An impression was created that if we really wanted to get something done in Ottawa we had to go through a lobbyist. It made members of Parliament seem irrelevant.

(1045)

I remember being in opposition and feeling the frustration. When I would run into constituents flying back to Toronto or in a restaurant or doing something in town here, I would say: "What are you doing here?" They would say: "Well, I'm with my lobbyist trying to get something done". I would ask: "What do you mean you are with your lobbyist? Why wouldn't you just come around? This is what we as members of Parliament are

here for. This is what we are here to help you with. You don't have to pay a lobbyist".

If we are talking about a piece of complex policy where they want to get some ultra-sophisticated advice on how one might advance a very complex issue, fine, there are some good professional policy people out there who can help. But you never have to pay to get access to your member of Parliament.

In dealing with this legislation in the first part of our mandate in a comprehensive way, we are not only going to help our constituents, whether they be from a social agency or a business, but we will also be reinvigorating the role of members of Parliament.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry through this legislation will make our role as members of Parliament much more meaningful than it has been in the last 10 years. In the previous 10 years it is a well known fact that if one had a really good lobbyist who could get to the eight or ten key people who were basically administering the government, one had a pretty good chance of getting one's issue on the front burner.

The Prime Minister is saying with his comprehensive ethics package: "Work with your members of Parliament. They're here. They're working for you". We are not trying to put lobbyists out of business, but we are trying to put the role and the responsibility of members of Parliament back to where it once was.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act gives us a chance to reflect on the state of our democracy. Since the Berlin wall came down and the Soviet empire was dismantled, we have seen some major attempts at democratization, by countries which for decades had lived under the yoke of a totalitarian state.

Against this background, we are sometimes tempted to idealize our own political system and give it virtues that do not, however, stand up to close scrutiny. There are also those who, rather simplistically, tend to confuse democracy with universal suffrage. I do not deny the fact that the electoral process is ultimately a symbol of democracy, but, with Alexis de Tocqueville, I want to point out that democracy means far more.

During the last federal election campaign, the Liberal Party announced it would work on enhancing the credibility of parliamentarians and wanted to give them a code of ethics. So what happened? Since the beginning of the 35th Parliament, the government has repeatedly done the exact opposite of what it pledged to do.

A few examples. Before the Standing Committee on Human Resources had even started its consultations and studies on the reform of health and social security programs, the government announced in its February 22 budget, without involving parliamentarians or the Canadian public, a number of draconian cuts in unemployment insurance totalling more than \$5 billion. Did the government receive a democratic mandate from the people, in this case?

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(1050)

Without the consent of opposition members democratically elected to the House of Commons, the government, by the sheer force of its majority, imposed the presence of non-elected senators on the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. Does this not show contempt for the democratic process? Before the Special Joint Committee responsible for reviewing Canada's foreign policy had even started its activities, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that from now on, development assistance would no longer be conditional on a country's respect for human rights.

Did the government receive a mandate from the people to that effect? Hardly, if the objections of Canadian stakeholders in the international development sector are any indication. I am thinking in particular of the tens of thousands of Canadians and Quebecers who spend their time and their energies so that NGOs from Canada and Quebec can provide humanitarian aid to the poorest in the world. I am also thinking of the close relationships forged with people in developing countries, relationships that are formed around the concepts of viable development, democratic development and respect for human rights.

In its Bill C-22, dealing with the cancellation of the contract to privatize terminals 1 and 2 at Toronto Airport, the government refuses to make full disclosure of all the dirty tricks surrounding the signing of this privatization contract. It refuses to force the main players in this affair to come before the Standing Committee on Transport.

In clause 10 of this bill, for example, the government gives itself the power to compensate friends of the federal system for services rendered before cancellation. Is our democracy such a good example? Where is this wonderful openness announced by the Liberals? Unfortunately, there is not much more openness in this bill.

For weeks and months, the government, through strategic planning or lack of ideas, reduced the legislative program to very little. The government is taking months and months to develop legislation, but very often it is introduced only the day before consideration in the House, which was the case with this bill. Can we really talk about making parliamentarians more responsible? Do you think that the democratic process is well served by such shortsightedness, such meanness?

In our parliamentary system, opposition parties are part and parcel of the democratic process. Should a government concerned about democratic principles not make a minimum of

effort so that Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, an expression dear to federalists, can play its role efficiently?

The bill amending the Lobbyists Registration Act is at the heart of the debate on democracy, since the activities of these professionals are always the very opposite of the democratic process. Let us keep in mind that in a democratic society the long-standing principle of one man, or woman, one vote is the cornerstone of democracy. By definition, lobbyists are constantly trying to influence the political power in order to obtain privileges or special favours for a particular individual or group. It is their *raison d'être*.

We may tolerate this practice as a necessary evil, but we cannot accept the lack of transparency which too often accompanies it. The present bill, aimed at bringing transparency to the practice of lobbying in Canada, is broadly based on the commitments contained in the Liberal red book. Originally, the provisions of the bill were supposed to be much more stringent than any existing legislation. However, if we look at it more closely it falls short of the commitments made by the Liberals during the last election campaign and does not meet citizens' expectations concerning the promised reform.

Of course, some elements of the bill are in keeping with the Bloc Québécois' ideas on this issue. It appears that some amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act match the recommendations made by the Commons committee.

(1055)

According to the bill, the Governor in Council designates the ethics counsellor who, among other things, has to develop a code of conduct. The ethics counsellor is also mandated to investigate alleged violations. However, the ethics counsellor is designated by order of the Governor in Council. Why is the ethics counsellor not accountable to Parliament, instead of just the Prime Minister?

Also, the bill seems to have diluted other important demands made by the Bloc Québécois. For example, lobbyists are only required to disclose the name of the government department or institution they will be lobbying and not the amount of money they will be spending on their activities, if such activities are subject to an investigation.

Moreover, the code of conduct to be developed by the ethics counsellor will not be a statutory instrument. With this provision, the government significantly reduces the impact of the code.

Political actions of members sitting in this House are very often offset by the cynicism many voters feel towards the politicians whom they do not trust any more. For too long now, they have heard politicians make promises and do the exact opposite. Interdependence is not something you have to take into account only at the international level. All elected members

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are affected by the statements and the actions of all politicians. That is why, in my view, this bill does not go far enough.

Finally, I want to say that, since lobbying is not available to everyone, because there will always be honest citizens who refuse to resort to such influence networks and others who cannot afford such services, it undermines the principle of democracy.

Consequently, the Bloc will co-operate in the effort to improve this bill which does not even come close to the people's expectations or the Liberal promises.

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette-Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to participate in the debate on referring this bill, an Act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act, to committee prior to second reading.

Lobbying is a long-standing part of democracy in this country. It pre-dates Confederation. Ever since the birth of this country, individuals have tried, directly or indirectly, to influence government decisions in their favour.

[English]

This House knows along with the increased activity by lobbyists grew a concern among Canadians. So long as the activities by lobbyists were conducted outside public view, Canadians might question whether government decisions were indeed made for the public good or under undue influence from a particular group.

[Translation]

This concern is nothing new. In 1969, the first private members' bills were tabled to demand that lobbying be opened to public scrutiny. By the time the government announced the establishment of a system for the registration of lobbyists in 1985, about 20 such private bills had been tabled but none had been passed by Parliament.

[English]

In 1985 the Government of Canada took up the cause of lobbying reform and issued a discussion paper which was studied by the Standing Committee on Election, Privileges and Procedure. The ideas presented in that standing committee report became the basis for the original Lobbyists Registration Act. It was given royal assent in September 1988 and came into force a year later.

[Translation]

This Act rests upon the fundamental principle that the registration of lobbyists serves to inform the public about lobbying and to guarantee that government decisions are made on the basis of the issues. In other words, the Act seeks to make lobbying transparent. The public has a right to know who is trying to influence government decisions.

[English]

By opening up the process to public scrutiny registration provides the opportunity for others to initiate their own efforts to present their views to the government.

This government believes that every Canadian has the right to approach government officials without using lobbyists as an intermediary. No one should feel they have to hire a lobbyist to bring matters to the attention of their member of Parliament, the ministers of the crown, public servants or any other institution in our governmental system.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I would remind the House that, during the 1993 election, the Liberal Party of Canada promised that we would implement the Standing Committee's recommendation.

[English]

The registry will indicate who is attempting to influence what government department and agency on what specific subject matter, on whose behalf and using what technique. They will also be required to clarify any given information at the request of the registrar.

[Translation]

The amendments also provide for a review of the Act by Parliament after a period of four years.

[English]

These measures in total represent a major step in the evolution of lobbying in Canada.

[Translation]

The sub-committee members may want to make suggestions to enhance this legislation in order to ensure that it adequately guarantees the openness and transparency of lobbying activities. It is therefore proper that members have the opportunity to make their comments before the bill goes to second reading.

[English]

The Speaker: It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members, pursuant to Standing Orders 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MEDAL OF BRAVERY

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, today the Governor General, His Excellency, the Right Hon. Ramon Hnatyshyn, will honour three police officers from Burlington with the medal of bravery.

Sergeant Stephen J. Carroll, Constable Gonzalo Couce and Constable Thomas A. Doherty are officers with the Halton Regional Police Force.

On September 27, 1993, Sergeant Carroll and Constables Couce and Doherty were called into a high risk situation and attempted to save a woman who had been shot outside her home. Although Sergeant Carroll managed to carry her to safety, the Burlington woman did not survive. Constables Couce and Doherty later entered the house to find that the gunman, her former husband, had killed himself.

Police officers across the nation take incredible risks to keep us safe. I commend all of them for their hard work and their dedication to public safety.

Today the efforts of Sergeant Carroll, Constable Couce and Constable Doherty are being recognized with a medal. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to all 30 recipients of medals today and to all Canadian police officers for their dedication.

* * *

[Translation]

FRANCOPHONE PUBLIC SERVANTS

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, according to a front-page report in *Le Droit* on June 11, 1988, "francophone public servants must bite their tongue".

Paul Gaboury reported at the time that in spite of the Official Languages Act, English was still the language of work in the federal public service in the Ottawa region. By all accounts, the situation is not all that different in 1994.

Francophone employees realize that there is a world of difference between the public service's language policies and day-to-day reality. French, their mother tongue, must take a back seat to English.

Many have said that they are unwilling to stand up for their rights for fear of reprisals ranging from isolation to being denied opportunities for advancement. This is just one more example of the dubious results of federalist rhetoric.

[English]

THE FAMILY

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, this week's family poll indicated that, although the majority of Canadians are happy with their own family life, they fear for the future of their families. They see warning signs that indicate the family is seriously threatened.

I am disappointed at the apathetic attitude of the government toward these fears and concerns. Throughout this past week my colleagues and I have presented in the House the issues of concern to families.

The government has not responded with a single constructive word. The Liberals have ignored the wishes of Canadians by maintaining and pursuing legislation that is harmful to the family. It is a betrayal of the trust of those who elected them.

If the Ministers of Justice, Finance, and Human Resources Development would dare to get close to the grassroots of Canada they would discover how deeply troubled the families feel. But the Liberals are not paying attention.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues and I are here to defend the interest of Canadian families but we will not allow the family to die a slow death at the hands of the government.

* * *

(1105)

WATER

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, here is another example of how the government is putting sustainable development into action.

On June 9 an agreement was signed in Halifax between the Government of Canada and the province of Nova Scotia. This agreement, called the Canada-Nova Scotia Economy Agreement, was developed under the authority of the Canada Water Act.

Its purpose is to help integrate good water resource management practices with economic decision-making. By better understanding the value of water and its importance to economic prosperity, Canadians will be able to make informed decisions about their water use.

The real value of the new agreement will be improved long-term economic growth by ensuring that water will be used wisely in Nova Scotia and that it will be kept available for future economic development.

This agreement illustrates our ongoing commitment to establishing frameworks in which environmental policy and economic policy work together, laying a firm base for sustainable development.

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EDUCATION

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I have discovered in my riding that our public school system is in desperate need of overhaul.

While education is a provincial jurisdiction, I believe that federal government funding of unemployment insurance and a portion of post-secondary education makes us partners with the provinces in working toward an improved educational environment.

Forced passing of students with poor reading and other academic skills is not in the best interests of Canada. Poor discipline has led to a situation where many teachers fear for their safety.

Different programs in different provinces are retarding our growth as one nation. We should immediately undertake a national forum on education in order to fulfil all government commitments to provide for an educated and motivated generation of new Canadians who will have to deal with the changes demanded by the 21st century.

* * *

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, a woman in the riding of Oxford recently collected over 500 names on a petition asking for changes to the Young Offenders Act. These petitioners are asking the government to create a law that will protect the victims rather than the offender.

The justice minister has done a great deal to advance the cause of victims' rights by proposing legislation which is now before the justice committee to ban the distribution of serial killer board games and trading cards. I believe the changes proposed to the Young Offenders Act will assure the Canadian people that youths must take responsibility for their actions.

I would like to thank these petitioners for informing me of their concerns and for taking it upon themselves to try to improve our justice system.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Governor of Vermont stated clearly yesterday at the meeting of New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers that he was prepared to maintain good business relations with a sovereign Quebec. Not surprisingly, our neighbours to the south are proving to be the most receptive of all to our democratic plans for sovereignty.

The Governor of Vermont rightfully pointed out that the business community in his state has no qualms about a sovereign Quebec government. Vermont has understood that it is in its best interests to respect the democratic choice of Quebecers and not to engage in a debate about the province's future. There is no question that the New England states will maintain their sound economic relations with a sovereign Quebec, just as all of Quebec's other trading partners will.

The federal government's fear-mongering is simply not working.

* * *

[*English*]

GRAND RABBI OF LUBAVITCH

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today, somewhat belatedly but with no less sincerity, to pay tribute and to mourn the passing of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson who served as the Grand Rabbi of Lubavitch for four decades.

Rabbi Schneerson's devotion to his community and to society as a whole is demonstrated in his legacy of achievements which includes the establishment of drug rehabilitation centres, prisoner outreach programs, non-profit loan organizations, day schools and Education Day U.S.A. The world is a poorer place with the passing of Rabbi Schneerson.

I would ask all members of the House, and indeed all Canadians, to join with me in honouring the memory of the Rabbi and I would ask members to join with me in extending our deepest sympathies to the Lubavitch community at this most difficult time.

* * *

BLOOD FRACTIONATION PLANT

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, as a member from Ontario, I would like to express my support for the immediate construction of the blood fractionation plant. This is a vital initiative for the health and safety of Canadians.

The Department of Health established a blue ribbon panel composed of independent experts in this field to review the issue of blood fractionation. I welcome their report which concluded that blood fractionation should begin immediately in Canada. It was last fall that Halifax was chosen, after an extensive site selection process conducted by the Canadian Red Cross Society, as the best location in the country for this project.

(1110)

This issue is far too important for petty regional politics. We need a fractionation plant and we need it now. This is not just good news for Nova Scotia, this is great news for all Canadians.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, Canada's private radio broadcasters have suffered very tough times in recent years.

In the past three years, collectively they have lost more than \$100 million. In 1992 private radio stations on average lost \$72,000 and 58 per cent were unprofitable. Now the Department of Canadian Heritage, in amending the Copyright Act, is considering major new fees on private broadcasters known as neighbouring rights.

I am very concerned that the neighbouring rights amendment, as proposed, would be detrimental to the survival of small radio stations in my riding in Truro and in Amherst.

It is essential that any changes in copyright law must not endanger the vital services of small town broadcasters to all Canadians.

* * *

BLACK WATCH REGIMENTAL BAND

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I want to protest the proposed cuts to the Black Watch Regimental Band stationed in Montreal. In effect these cuts would kill this renowned Canadian institution.

The Black Watch Band is 132 years old and is the last remaining highland band in Quebec. It represents an outstanding regiment which distinguished itself in both the first and second world wars.

This band has been a significant symbol of Canadian valour, culture and social commitment. Every year the Black Watch Band appears at a wide variety of community and social functions, including the Canada Day parade, the St. Patrick's parade and many others.

It seems strange that in the same month where we honoured our Canadian troops for their D-Day contribution and the Black Watch Band participated in these ceremonies, the government is now taking steps to cut the band.

Since it is only a matter of \$28,000, which will not affect our deficit one way or another, I ask the government to reconsider this decision which would kill a great Montreal institution, one that contributes much to our heritage and to our community.

* * *

[Translation]

AIDS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the member for Wild Rose said something in this House that I found quite outrageous. He condemned the Depart-

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ment of Health for distributing an information brochure on how AIDS is transmitted.

The disturbing thing is that an elected representative of the people does not know that AIDS is a viral infection transmitted through blood or semen. For lack of protection and sufficient information, hundreds of people have contracted this disease and died from it. It is unfortunate that Reform members are so hard on the homosexual community. This gut-level homophobia has no place in Parliament.

Some Reform Party members have shown narrow-mindedness, partisanship and base ignorance of the AIDS problem. The Department of Health should give them an intensive briefing on how AIDS is transmitted; this search for information should be the first step to greater tolerance.

* * *

[English]

RU486

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, recent reports confirm that a number of health practitioners have illegally imported and are prescribing the abortion pill RU486.

The drug's manufacturer has said it will not apply to test and sell the drug in Canada unless specifically invited to do so. The government has been quoted as saying that it never asks companies to make specific drugs available and will not make an exception for the manufacturer of RU486. Nevertheless the drug is in Canada and is being prescribed to women without legal approval.

Possession and use of illegal drugs are serious criminal offences and for good reason. The health and safety of Canadians depends, to a large degree, on effective and enforced drug legislation. Criminal law dealing with RU486 should be no exception.

Therefore I call on the Solicitor General to initiate an RCMP investigation into the possession, use and prescription of the illegal drug RU486.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to remind members of the House and all Canadians that Environment Canada is accepting nominations for environmental achievement awards until August 2.

(1115)

[Translation]

These awards to be given by the Minister of the Environment at a conference in December show that every effort helps to protect our environment and thus our future.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Let us hope that award winners and nominees alike will be an inspiration for others wanting to become environmentally responsible citizens.

We can all contribute to this worthwhile effort by nominating constituents who are making concerted efforts to protect and restore the environment.

* * *

THE REFORM PARTY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, let me ask the House the following skill-testing questions. What is the name of the party that preached listening to people and then proceeded to vote against a measure approved by business, government and natives in the Yukon Territory?

What is the name of the party that professed to do parliamentary business in a different way and then used Harvie Andre and Erik Nielsen tactics?

What is the name of the party that professed to cut costs and government waste and then proceeded to delay the parliamentary committee by 16 hours with points of order and clarification and repetition, thereby wasting \$13,000 taxpayer dollars?

Give up? It was the Reform Party of course. It is time for a recall.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing. Is that the right one?

Mr. Taylor: The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: That is close enough.

Mr. Taylor: Yes it is. We are neighbours.

* * *

TRANSPORT

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Transport should resign. In recent days he has demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the western grain economy and in doing so he has completely ignored the history of the transportation debate which time and time again has proven the support for the Crow benefit among the people it most affects.

In a country as large and diverse as Canada our government should be looking at developing a national transportation policy that supports and not penalizes those who depend on transportation for their livelihood.

If the minister wants to stay in transport then he should be thinking about ways in which his department can help those who depend most upon it. If the minister will not review and renounce his position on eliminating the Crow benefit then he

should step aside and let someone who knows western Canada and cares about transportation take over.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD*[Translation]***INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The latest information on the status of intergovernmental negotiations to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers points to mediocre results. Yet, on May 6, Canadian Press reported that an agreement was imminent and even that a nearly complete draft agreement would be given to the provincial trade ministers at their meeting in Winnipeg on May 9 and 10.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Can he tell us if the June 30 deadline set by his government to reach an agreement is still valid and if the agreement, if there is one, will really eliminate interprovincial trade barriers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are quite confident that an agreement will be reached by June 30 and that it will be substantial.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister not realize that, given the serious reservations expressed by several provinces and by Quebec, the agreement announced by the federal government may be timid and full of major exemptions and amount in essence to an empty shell?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are consulting the provinces. They have their jurisdiction, we have ours and we are working toward an agreement that will satisfy all the parties involved. We strongly favour the elimination of as many interprovincial trade barriers as possible in Canada. Some provincial governments are reluctant, however, and I am surprised that the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois is blaming the Liberal government for being too nice to the provinces.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, given, one, that the forum on health has been postponed indefinitely; two, that the Minister of Human Resources Development is going it alone by trying high-handedly to impose a reform of social programs on the provinces; and three, that the so-called agreement on the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers may worsen interprovincial relations instead of improving them, does the Prime Minister not realize that, after three months, his government's record on federal-provincial relations is a dismal failure?

(1120)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised by the question because in matters of trade, we have our federal jurisdiction. We could impose things, but we do not want to do so. The Constitution clearly states that it is a federal responsibility. While we want to respect the provinces'

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opinions, those who favour the status quo in Canada do not want anything to change.

If the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe tells me that I must use federal powers, we can settle this in two minutes. However, I am so nice that the hon. member criticizes the federal Prime Minister for consulting too much. Now that is a switch!

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, newspapers are reporting this morning that in a report which is now before Cabinet, the human resources minister's panel of experts on social program reform has recommended that further cuts of up to \$6 billion be made to the unemployment insurance program, which would result in over 500,000 claimants being disintitiled.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development commit now to rejecting out of hand this despicable recommendation aimed once again at reducing the federal deficit at the expense of the unemployed and the most disadvantaged among us?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday that such reports are purely hypothetical and speculative. I do not pay any attention to them. I would advise the hon. member not to pay any attention to them either.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand from the minister's answer that the only way to reduce unemployment is to force people onto welfare?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Indian affairs.

Recently the minister has been travelling across this country telling aboriginal communities if they want self-government to step up and sign on the dotted line. Our party believes there are many serious issues that the government is not addressing in this kamikaze approach to self-government.

Will the minister stop his headlong rush into these deals and ensure that no more deals are signed until full consultation with all concerned citizens takes place and a detailed cost accounting of each deal is disclosed?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is a very broad question with no focus but I am prepared to answer it in this way.

I am as concerned as the hon. member about costs and accountability. I am prepared to work with the Reform Party to that end.

If holding our committee until 6 a.m. this morning for no useful purpose is any indication of the way the hon. member wants to go, I am not with him.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

The fact that this government believes that cabinet should be the dispute settling mechanism in these deals indicates to me that it is only interested in maintaining the current paternalistic system that now exists.

Will the minister remove the political and partisan interference from self-government agreements and establish an autonomous body to deal with the dispute settlements?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, again it is a matter of different approaches and different philosophies. We are working with the aboriginal people.

I might remind the hon. member that our techniques vary in this way. The first question you asked in this House had 58 words in it and eight were derogatory. Eight were derogatory about the very people you purport to be defending today.

(1125)

The Speaker: I would remind all hon. members that both questions and answers should be directed to the Chair.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question. It was a very interesting response. If this minister really had any sense of responsibility, he would have appeared before the committee to defend his own legislation.

We heard from witnesses who had real concerns with this deal. The minister had the arrogance to ignore these concerns. If the minister will not defend his legislation, will he defend the complete abdication of his responsibility and his apparent disdain for the democratic process? What does he have to say—

The Speaker: Order, please. I would encourage all hon. members when they are putting questions if they would put the questions. I think we are getting into a great deal of editorializing, if you will.

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That is not particularly helpful to the debate or the questions and answers on either side. I intervened before. I heard the hon. member putting a question, and so would he put the question now.

Mr. Chatters: Mr. Speaker, my question was what does he have to say to Canadians who have concerns about his self-government legislation?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, when I inherited the Yukon legislation in the form it was in I took the time to go to Yukon and spend three days negotiating with the Yukon people. When I say Yukon people, I mean the Chamber of Commerce, the mayors, the First Nations and the legislature.

When the CYI came to Ottawa for a week and a half, it tried to set up a meeting with these hon. members. They would not even meet with it. That is our dialogue with the people. That is this party's dialogue with the people.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister unveiled his government's action plan to take, as he put it, "unprecedented action to open up the process of government in Ottawa". In his statement, the Prime Minister said, and I quote: "Deals like the Pearson Airport deal must never be allowed to happen again".

Since the Prime Minister claims to mean business when he talks about restoring integrity in the federal administration, how does he explain his government's refusal to give to the ethics counsellor the mandate to investigate the role of lobbyists in the Pearson Airport scandal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as regards the Toronto Airport issue, we did what was our duty and what we said we would do: We cancelled the contract. What else can we do? The ethics counsellor has the necessary power to conduct any inquiry which he deems appropriate.

This is a new Parliament and, unless I am mistaken, the legislation provides no compensation for those who paid lobbyists regarding the Pearson Airport contract. Mr. Nixon conducted an investigation and reported his findings within 30 days, which was faster than anything we had seen before. A decision was made. The contract was cancelled, period. The ethics counsellor will fulfill his mandate in compliance with the provisions of the act, which go a lot farther than what was unanimously recommended by the committee last year.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Prime Minister to read the bill thoroughly. Compensation can be made with Cabinet approval.

Since yesterday's statement was silent on this issue, does the Prime Minister intend to follow up on the Minister of Transport's suggestion to no longer allow lobbyists fees as a tax deduction, a measure which the American government intends to take?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, tax exemptions are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance. He is informed of all the suggestions made by ministers and members when he drafts his budget. Consequently, any recommendation in that regard should be made to that minister.

This is therefore a technical issue which will certainly be of interest to the Minister of Finance.

* * *

(1130)

[English]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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

As members of this House know, on behalf of the government Mr. Bob Wright is currently accepting claims for compensation from the consortium affected by the cancellation of the Pearson airport development deal. Mr. Wright, a Liberal fund-raiser, friend and former law partner of the current Prime Minister is receiving \$1,000 a day for this job.

Will the Prime Minister tell this House how this appointment fulfils the government's promise of governing with integrity?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the member is attacking a person who cannot defend himself in this House.

Mr. Bob Wright is an extremely competent lawyer who was the head of a commission for the Ontario government and was kept on by the NDP government. He is an extremely honourable person. Yes, he helped me in 1984. Yes, he did what some people do for members in their ridings. When someone makes a contribution to get someone else elected he should not apologize for it. What he is being paid at the moment is less than what I charged when I was a lawyer.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, a supplemental for the Prime Minister.

The Minister of Transport when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport on May 31 stated that Mr. Wright had no mandate to negotiate, but in fact he was simply accepting claims to be reviewed by claims analysts.

In light of this, will the Prime Minister tell Canadian taxpayers why we owe Mr. Wright over \$66,000 plus expenses for simply collecting receipts?

Oral Questions

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it must be Friday to hear such pitiful statements from the opposition.

I said at the committee, where the hon. member had every opportunity to pursue this further, that Mr. Wright had been given a very specific mandate. He was not to negotiate any payments to any lobbyists who were involved in the Pearson deal. He was not to negotiate any arrangements that provided for lost profits. He was to negotiate on the basis of appropriate out of pocket expenses.

With all due respect to the hon. member, this person has been chairman of the Ontario Securities Commission. A person operating in the legal profession in Ontario with the reputation and ability of Mr. Wright regularly charges fees to his personal clients, corporate clients and the Government of Canada at least twice and three times what is being charged to the Government of Canada as he carries out his responsibilities in this matter.

* * *

[Translation]

KANESATAKE

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs.

We have learned that the Department of Human Resources Development is about to provide substantial financial assistance for the establishment of a parapolice patrol force on the Kanestake reserve.

Given the very serious problems with security on the reserve and the tense relations between Chief Jerry Peltier and a substantial portion of the Mohawk population, many people have expressed serious fears about the addition of—

[English]

The Speaker: Order. It is getting a little bit difficult to hear the questions and answers. I wonder if all hon. members would please give their full attention to Question Period. Would the hon. member please put his question now.

[Translation]

Mr. Caron: Mr. Speaker, many people are concerned about the establishment of this patrol force.

Was the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development briefed on the discussions which took place between the Kanestake Band Council and the Department of Human Resources Development concerning the establishment of such a patrol force at Kanestake?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the member's statements are greatly exaggerated.

(1135)

These Aboriginal project proposals involve establishing a team to operate a 24-hour suicide hot-line.

Teams would also be trained to deal with distress and family violence situations. This initiative is entirely constructive, peaceful and humane. This is not a paramilitary force that is being set up, but rather a team to assist groups and individuals in distress.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, can the Indian affairs minister tell us what specific guarantees he has obtained from the band council to reassure the residents of Kanestake, who are afraid to see this patrol force become a police force?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the hon. member is trying to create a situation of fear when there should be none at all.

The project is very simple. Under our department there is the Pathways group. This group of native people from across Canada make decisions on employment projects and give assistance.

As I just said the purpose of this group and the project is not to provide any police service whatsoever. It is to help families who are in distress, who are in fear of suicide, who are in fear of family violence. It is part of the healing process that we must provide for native people across this country. It is exactly the kind of thing that can bring peace and reconciliation in that area which is so very important that we provide.

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest reports this week that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs made some comments that the federal government is contemplating holding a referendum on Quebec independence. It is good to see the government acknowledge the value of direct democracy.

Can the minister give us some details of the government's plans? What would be the timing of a national referendum and when would the House expect to hear more details?

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 federal government is not planning to have a referendum on these questions. It is not planning it for a good reason. The Liberal government in Quebec will win the election and we will have no need for such a referendum.

Oral Questions

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, that is one of the more rapid policy changes we have seen. It certainly does not reflect the trust us approach we heard from the Prime Minister yesterday on the lobbying issue.

In committee a couple of days ago the member for Saint-Denis was saying that many voters are too illiterate to be able to get their names on voters lists and referendums. We believe that Canadians are well informed and should be consulted.

It has been the position of this party in the past that on constitutional issues there should be national referendums. Quebec's separation would be—

The Speaker: I would ask that the hon. member put his question forthwith.

Mr. Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister agree that Canadians should be consulted by national referendums on major constitutional changes, yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, when we debated this question under the previous government I was the one who proposed the national referendum which led to the vote on the Charlottetown accord.

There is a law on referendums but it is not an instrument we use for every question. I believe that the fundamental responsibility in democracy lies with members of Parliament to stand and vote representing their people.

If the hon. member does not have enough confidence to use his own judgment and wants a referendum on everything, if he does not have the guts to make up his mind and cannot stand the heat, then he should get out of the kitchen. We are here to make decisions and we will make them.

* * *

(1140)

[Translation]

RECYCLING

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. In a report published last week, Statistics Canada announced that Canada was one of five countries with the highest waste production per capita in the world. Subsequently, the Minister of the Environment said that she considered introducing an environmental tax next fall if negotiations on waste recycling between the provinces and the private sector were not successful.

In dealing with this problem, does the minister intend to launch a national waste tax program or would she let each province develop its own strategy?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in the announcement made following the meeting of the Council of Environment Ministers held in St. John, New Brunswick, three weeks ago, it was agreed unanimously to develop a specific strategy that would be in place at the next meeting.

Obviously, waste collection is a provincial responsibility, and any action plan that results from our meeting in November 1994 will have to be implemented by the provinces.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of the Environment stressed the importance of harmonizing policies in Canada. Are we to understand, considering the government's poor record on federal-provincial agreements and irrespective of the outcome of negotiations between the provinces and the private sector, that the federal government will go ahead this fall with a national waste recycling policy?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had listened to my answer to his first question, I thought I made that clear. This is not a matter of the federal minister imposing her own solution. This was a unanimous decision made by all environment ministers at the meeting in St. John. We identified a problem, and we wanted a harmonized solution.

We followed the path described by my colleague, Mr. Chrétien, the environment critic, who stated at the beginning of his mandate that the environment was not a provincial problem but one that went beyond provincial boundaries and was shared by all Canadians. What I throw in the water in Ontario eventually arrives in Quebec, and that is why we want a harmonized policy.

* * *

[English]

PAROLE

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Many people in my riding of London—Middlesex are greatly concerned with the reintegration of repeat violent offenders into our community. The parole system is our only mechanism to return offenders to the community with controlled supervision and support, however it is not without some flaws.

Could the minister inform the House of the steps that will be taken to improve our current system of parole?

Oral Questions

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes an important point in his question.

First, I would like to inform the House it is our intention to propose legislation quite soon that will cover a number of areas in the subject matter he mentioned. It will make it easier for the Parole Board to rule that the correctional service must keep in prison until the end of the terms imposed by the courts those convicted of violent sexual offences against children.

Second, it is a matter of public record that we are proceeding to appoint people of proven merit and competence to the Parole Board.

Third, we intend in legislation to create a process of disciplinary review for Parole Board members.

All these steps, including steps to improve the training of Parole Board members, will help restore public confidence in the Parole Board's operations.

* * *

THE FAMILY

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday for the second time the government turned to the Reform Party for help in defining the family. Instead of answering my colleague's question, the secretary of state for finance showed his confusion about what the family is.

I would like to advise him that the family is already clearly defined in the Income Tax Act for which he is partially responsible. I suggest he look it up. The problem is not the definition of the family but the impact of the tax system on the family. The current tax system penalizes parents—

(1145)

The Speaker: My colleagues, I think it is reasonable to have a sentence or maybe two before a question but when we get four or five, I would encourage all hon. members in their questions and in their responses to please be as brief as they can. Will the hon. member please put his question.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Finance. I hope he will finally answer. Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that the current tax system discriminates against families who care for their children at home?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)): Mr. Speaker, it is not only Friday but I think there is a full moon.

The third answer is this. Our tax system is based on, as members all know, individual tax returns. We do not have family tax returns. There are certain things in individual tax returns that affect the family. Yes, there are certain distinctions in the

Income Tax Act for a variety of things. It does not discriminate against them. It simply recognizes that there are certain items that affect the incomes of families.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, let me clearly say that the Reform Party is in no way opposed to families who send their children to day care. We are opposed to a system that penalizes parents who choose to care for their children at home.

Will the government ensure a fair tax system by removing the penalties for parents who care for their pre-school children at home?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in the Income Tax Act that implies that there is a tax applied to parents who keep their children at home.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PAY EQUITY

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

As part of Public Service Week, it is necessary to recall the importance of equal pay for men and women whose functions are recognized as equivalent. In answer to a question raised by the Official Opposition on March 8, the President of the Treasury Board said that this issue was a priority for this government.

Can the President of the Treasury Board tell us if his bargaining agents are about to reach an agreement with his employees on the back pay required to bring certain classifications up to date?

[*English*]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, Treasury Board is in exploratory discussions with the employee representatives, the unions.

We have held three or four meetings with the Professional Institute. We have held at least one or two meetings with the Public Service Alliance. We are continuing to explore working toward a solution to this matter. We are a pay equity employer. We want to resolve this matter as quickly as we can so that we can curtail this very long tribunal process that the previous government put in place.

We want to treat our employees with fairness and equity.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, since the government is an employer that cares about pay equity, as he said on March 8, can the President of the Treasury Board promise to respect his own law which forbids any discrimination in this regard?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, of course. We intend to try to get this matter settled and intend to be an equity employer. The previous government put money into pay equity and that is a very high priority intention of this government.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

On May 9, 1994, in response to a question from my colleague, the member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, the minister told this House that he had urged the provincial attorneys general to more aggressively pursue the prosecution of section 85 of the Criminal Code, the extra penalty for the use of a firearm during a crime.

I wrote two letters to the minister requesting an explanation of what was said to the provinces as well as any responses received regarding section 85 but have yet to receive a reply. Will the minister advise this House in general terms about the communications he had with the provinces over section 85?

(1150)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the communications I have had with the provinces are those I have described. I have written to my provincial and territorial counterparts and have drawn their attention to the fact that section 85(1) is there to deal with a problem of broad concern, which is the use of firearms in the commission of offences.

I have encouraged them to see that that section is used when the facts permit and that plea arrangements are not entered into which result in such charges being dropped in appropriate cases.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice stated in this House that he is contemplating further laws on guns. The emphasis seems to be government intervention with law-abiding gun owners rather than action with gun-toting criminals.

In view of the problems with section 85 of the Criminal Code can the minister indicate what he will do to make it a priority to fight criminals who have guns before he pursues a policy that interferes with law abiding gun owners?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the government has under consideration a wide variety of options which have been developed through caucus to be brought forward in the form of specific proposals. These will be intended and will be fashioned to deal with the criminal use of firearms. They will involve regulation

of firearms that will respect the legitimate use of rifles by hunters and by farmers.

* * *

ALEXANDRE MAKAR

Mr. John Loney (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

On June 7 I raised the question of the plight of Alexandre Makar of Edmonton, Alberta. Can the minister inform the House of the status of Mr. Makar's case?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, some two weeks ago the member and other colleagues of ours from Edmonton brought to the attention of this House the question of the Ukrainian individual who had certainly made a case for a compassionate review in terms of his landing and his medical inadmissibility.

As a result of that we opened up a line of communication with the province of Alberta as well as the province of Saskatchewan. I am happy to report that as of this morning through that the province of Alberta has accepted the case.

It shows that when provincial and federal governments do work together and involve the community that first raised the question of compassion, we can make decisions that both favour the individual circumstances and at the same time uphold the rule of the law.

* * *

*[Translation]***RADAR CONTROL**

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis—Hébert): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. There are two areas in Quebec, namely the North Shore and the Magdalen Islands, where airport control services in French are only available after an 8 to 15 minute delay, because they come under the jurisdiction of the Moncton control unit, which provides regular services in English only. Both these areas could be adequately served by the Quebec City radar control unit which the government is going to close down.

My question is this: How can the minister, who claims to be concerned with air safety, justify his statement to the effect that bilingual services can be provided from a bilingual province such as New Brunswick just as well as from anywhere else in Quebec, when the regular service provided from Moncton is only in English?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in any air navigation system, there are always areas where communication in one official language or the other, or both, is difficult. What we are saying, and I want to reassure my hon. colleague, is that anybody who uses air navigation services in Canada knows that they are exceptional and that they compare well with any other system in the world. If, as my hon. colleague is claiming, there are gaps here or there, we will try to see to them. But I do not like the fact that he is trying to create a red

herring. New Brunswick, including Moncton, is bilingual. We are very proud of it. We recognize our obligations to those who use the air navigation services and we will try to take all the necessary steps to ensure their safety.

(1155)

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, how does the minister justify that two areas in Quebec are not adequately served in French from the control unit in Quebec City, which could provide this service in French?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we will keep on doing our utmost to provide adequate services to ensure the safety of the people who use the air navigation system in Quebec and in the rest of Canada.

* * *

[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A few weeks ago I attended a briefing by a group of gun control activists. They freely acknowledged that “additional controls would have little or no effect on violent crime”. To justify their position they pointed to the 31 per cent of suicides that are committed with guns and which they claimed might be partly preventable.

Since 27 per cent of suicides are committed—

The Speaker: Order, please. Once again I am loathe to intervene in the question and answer period, but I would ask the hon. member to please put his question.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I was into my question. I am sorry.

Will the minister show some responsibility and protect us from ourselves by instituting a rope control program, with rope acquisition certificates and a mandatory registration of all ropes more than a metre long?

The Speaker: The Chair is a little confused. I am not quite sure if that is a hypothetical question or not, but I will permit the hon. minister to answer it, if he likes.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted. I should first observe that the hon. member has demonstrated that if we give him enough rope he will hang himself.

Oral Questions

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. On Wednesday my colleague from Prince George—Peace River pointed out that no hard data exists to demonstrate that further gun control legislation will reduce gun related crime. On several occasions the minister has stated that we must look for the root causes of crime rather than caving in to knee-jerk reactions.

Will the minister commit that he will introduce no further gun control legislation until there is hard statistical evidence that the current legislation is not working?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the approach which we take for safe homes and safe streets will be comprehensive dealing with the causes of crime, dealing with strengthening the criminal justice system and dealing as well with crime prevention.

The facts show that after the introduction of gun control legislation in 1976, indeed the criminal misuse of weapons did diminish and that is the statistical fact.

We are going to devise, we are going to introduce, we are going to develop with the support of caucus proposals for further regulation of firearms that will make this society even safer. That is only part of the comprehensive agenda of this government with respect to crime and violence in Canada.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

There are disturbing reports in connection with the trade agreement being negotiated between the federal government and the provinces to the effect that plans for cutting interprovincial trade barriers will create environmental and social harm.

Can the minister assure this House that the environment is being taken fully into account in these negotiations and that the end result will be a trade agreement in which environmental, social and trade goals will have been integrated?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I will of course pay tribute to the great reputation my colleague from Davenport has on environmental issues and his concerns. When he raises concerns on these issues we know they come from understanding and heartfelt conviction.

(1200)

In negotiating this internal trade agreement, for the first time in a trade agreement we are including a chapter dealing with environmental protection. It is the first time we have done that.

Points of Order

Let me say that among the principles we are including—and the council of ministers on the environment has been directly involved in the process and my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, has consulted on it—the environmental chapter will include provisions that will prevent provinces from weakening environmental measures as an inducement for investment. The chapter will encourage upward harmonization of environmental measures. Finally, the chapter will allow for the use of the precautionary principle.

These are key points. I know Reform Party members are not interested in the environment. They are indicating that by their response. We think it is important and I think it is important as well.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of human resources who, along with all Canadians, was delighted when the United Nations identified Canada out of 185 countries as the best place to live and raise a family.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Riis: We will also realize that one of the main reasons for that designation was the incredible wide range of social programs that reflect a caring and compassionate society.

The minister has indicated some dramatic, drastic changes and, from some of the leaked reports, perhaps even draconian changes. He has also indicated he will release his proposals in the middle of July when Parliament is not sitting. To keep in line with the traditions of the government to announce to Parliament first—

The Speaker: Order. We had a comment earlier that there must be a full moon. I suggest the moon is going to be out if we have long questions like this. Would the hon. member please put his question.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, when you only get one question a year you have to take advantage of that.

The Speaker: It surely should not take a year to put it.

Mr. Riis: To keep the tradition of the government of making major announcements when Parliament sits, would the minister give some thought to recalling Parliament in the middle of July so Parliament can receive his report and provide an opportunity for some immediate debate on this very critical set of changes?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker,

will the hon. member give a cast iron undertaking that he will definitely be here?

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to correct the record.

During my question to the minister and in his response he said that we refused to meet with the Council of Yukon Indians. In fact we arranged a meeting with the Council of Yukon Indians.

The Speaker: I just want to make a clarification before I start getting some letters.

When the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake rose to make a statement today I mentioned he was from Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing and then I said that was close enough.

I meant of course not that your ridings were close enough but that your seatmate was next to you. I just do not want to get any letters on that and I wanted to clarify it.

(1205)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during clause by clause consideration of Bill C-33 and Bill C-34 in the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development the member for Yukon was present and allowed to vote at the committee.

She was not a legal voting member according to Standing Order 114(2)(c). The standing order reads as follows:

At any time when no list has been filed with the clerk of the committee pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section or when no notice has been received by the clerk of the committee pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section, the Chief Whip of any recognized party may effect substitutions by filing notice thereof with the clerk of the committee, having selected the substitutes from among all the Members of his or her party and/or the independent members listed as associate members—pursuant to Standing Order 104(4)—

The relevant phrase is: “the independent members listed as associate members”. House of Commons records will indicate that the member for Yukon was not then and is not now an associate member of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Although a substitution form was filed by the chief opposition whip with the clerk naming her as a substitute, she did not meet the requirements as an independent under the standing orders in order to be a legitimate voting member. Yet the chairman of the committee allowed her to vote on more than one occasion.

Points of Order

Should you, Mr. Speaker, review the minutes of the committee meeting you will further note that I raised the matter as a point of order and it was dismissed by the chair. Even though the chair, the hon. member for Prince Albert—Churchill River, was made aware of this irregularity he continued to allow the member for Yukon to vote and participate as a member of the committee in good standing.

We are not questioning the presence of the hon. member for Yukon as the elected representative of Yukon. What we are questioning is the chair's primary responsibility to ensure that the committee operates under the rules established by the House of Commons.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, you rarely rule on proceedings in committee. However this is a clear breach of the standing orders. It is not a matter which can or should be left in the committee where it originated. The rules have been broken throughout the entire clause by clause consideration of Bill C-33 and Bill C-34. The report of the committee should be ruled out of order and the committee should be directed to go back and reconsider clause by clause Bills C-33 and Bill C-34.

The chairman of the aboriginal affairs committee whose role it is to uphold the rules of the committee knowingly allowed the rules to be broken. I suggest the chairman of the aboriginal affairs committee resign and allow another member to preside over clause by clause reconsideration of Bill C-33 and Bill C-34.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I also was a substitute member on that committee for a portion of last evening and starting at roughly 4.45 a.m. today.

It is well known by you, Mr. Speaker, that committees are masters of their own business. That is a principle that has long been accepted by Parliament and in previous rulings. Need I remind the Chair of the ruling on the Lachance case in the early 1980s as well as the ruling on what is known commonly as the Blenkarn report on the goods and services tax.

Furthermore, in the unlikely event, Mr. Speaker, that you were to review the proceedings of the committee you would find that in no case was any vote in a position whereby one person would have changed the vote. In fact for virtually all votes we had scores of 6:2 that were registered; in other words six people carrying each clause versus two against. The only exceptions I remember during the whole night were the odd votes on which one member of the Reform Party voted with the government making the score 7:1 instead of 6:2.

To review what I said previously, whether or not the vote deems that it is appropriate for him to review the business of the committee would not change the outcome of the vote. In any case, Mr. Speaker, sustaining the precedents I have brought to

your attention I think you would rule that in cases such as these the Speaker has not interfered with the reports of committees in the past.

(1210)

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would like to use this opportunity to point out what I believe is a serious fault in our system. While you review the committee events of last evening perhaps a point to keep in mind is the people of Yukon chose the hon. member for Yukon to represent them as their member of Parliament, knowing full well she was also a member of the New Democratic Party.

The issue before the aboriginal affairs committee last night was dealing exclusively with that territory, Indian land claims and Indian self-government in the Yukon territory. Being the only member from that territory it seems not unreasonable that she would want to play an advisory role, a serious role, in an issue that dealt explicitly and exclusively with her constituents.

Technically my hon. friend may be correct that it reveals some of the inappropriateness of some of our standing orders, particularly as they refer to committee and the role of so-called independent members. For my friend—and I respect the technical case that he is making—to suggest for a moment that the sole representative for the Yukon territory not be allowed to participate in critical legislation regarding her constituents surely must point out a major flaw in our system.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to hon. members and the point is not that the hon. member was allowed to be present and participate in the committee. The point is that this was a clear breach of the rules, of the standing orders. The chairman was in complete breach of his responsibility as chairman by not recognizing the point of order I raised, which was a very clear point of order.

As I mentioned, we have no difficulty with the hon. member for Yukon being present. The difficulty we have which we raised in the committee meeting last night with the chairman was that by allowing her to vote the chair was in clear breach of the standing orders that govern the committee proceedings.

We ask, Mr. Speaker, that you rule on that point.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I would simply like to advise the House that I was in attendance at the committee meeting between midnight and 5 a.m. during the point at which the question was raised by the hon. member.

The clerk presented the appropriate documents to the Reform Party for examination and advised the chair of the committee that the member for Yukon was eligible to vote. The chair proceeded on the basis of the advice of the clerk appointed by the House.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): I would like to speak, if I may, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order that was just raised. In my mind, the Official Opposition is perfectly entitled to allow any member of this House it pleases to speak on an issue that not only concerns a member from a party other than ours but also on which the hon. member in question had special knowledge.

We think it is an extremely open-minded thing to do to transcend party boundaries and draw on the parliamentary expertise of all members of this House so as to improve the bill under review and ensure it better meets the needs of the people for whom it is intended.

I do not think it is in the interest of the Reform Party to try and control or decide beforehand who should or should not be allowed to speak on this bill. We have willingly agreed to let the hon. member use speaking time which was ours. I believe there are precedents in parliamentary law in that regard. I think such a gesture serves democracy well, as it reflects unselfishness and care for first-rate legislative action.

(1215)

[English]

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I made it clear earlier that we had no objection to the presence of the hon. member for Yukon there and in fact participating in the debate. The point I raise in this point of order is the fact that she was not a legal voting member of that committee.

Even though the chief opposition whip had signed the proper notice with the clerk, the fact is the member for Yukon was not listed as an associate member and therefore—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I think the member already made that point earlier. We do not need to hear points repeated.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would like one short opportunity to intervene in this point of order as well.

I am an associate member of that committee. The leader of my party, the member for Yukon, was sitting on my behalf in the aboriginal affairs committee.

What this debate points out is that there could be a flaw in our standing orders that this House now has an opportunity to correct, knowing the difficulties that it puts in place for independent, associate or other members of this House who have an interest in committee work but who are not members of a specific committee.

On behalf of the member for Yukon and my party I want to thank the members of the Official Opposition for their co-operation and assistance in allowing the member for Yukon to participate in the way she was able to during that committee.

I think the work the members of the Official Opposition have done in this case should serve as an example of the change that we need to make in the standing orders so that we will be able to allow forms to be signed by someone who cannot sign a form, to allow for participation of other members.

Members realize that an associate member has no way to transfer his or her place at the table to another member and that the only means of voting is to take the place of a member who does have a voting spot which rests with the three major parties.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. colleagues, I wish to thank all the hon. members who have spoken on this rather sensitive question.

[English]

We are dealing with Standing Order 114. The matter gets before the House today because of the fact there will be a report presented from the relevant committee. The matter will be considered carefully, taking into mind all of what the members have said today and the Chair will make a ruling on it presumably on Monday.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2), I have the pleasure to present to this House, in both official languages, the first Canadian report to the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

* * *

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to table in this House today, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made recently by the government.

Pursuant to Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, on

Routine Proceedings

March 8 of this year the Prime Minister announced a review of the operation of the administrative flight services.

(1220)

I am pleased to announce today that the government has finished its review on how we operate the Challenger air service. As a result, we are completely revamping the delivery of this service to save Canada's taxpayers more than \$24 million a year.

We are replacing the more costly service that the previous government ran with a more scaled down version. As the Prime Minister promised, on March 8 we looked at options that were in keeping with the government's objectives of frugality and integrity.

We have delivered on our promise. The costs of the new service will be nearly 60 per cent less than under the previous government, dropping from \$41.4 million to \$17 million a year.

I want to make it clear that a flight service for the royal family, the Governor General, the Prime Minister, ministers of this cabinet and foreign dignitaries is essential in a country as vast as Canada.

The severe time restraints under which these people work makes this service absolutely necessary.

[Translation]

Each of our major trading partners provides a similar service to its head of state and ministers.

[English]

Now that we are confident we can deliver the service cost effectively, I expect that ministers will make use of the fleet for their official duties when the schedules of commercial air services cannot meet their needs.

Variable costs for flying now are expected to decline from about \$4,600 an hour to \$2,200 an hour. The cost per flying hour, if you add in capital costs, is estimated to decrease from about \$17,000 to \$6,800. This is only one example of the kind of specific measures which I will be implementing and this government will be implementing with a view to reducing expenditures of the federal government.

We have cut back the number of Challenger planes from six to four. We have cut the flight crews from eleven to six. We have re-engineered maintenance arrangements and we have lowered training costs without sacrificing any safety.

From now on the Department of National Defence will continue to provide the Challenger aircraft and crews, but Transport Canada will provide service and maintenance, with the private sector providing many of the other support services, the baggage handling, the meals and the lounge services.

[Translation]

We involved the Auditor General in the review, addressing concerns he raised in his 1993 report. In a recent exchange of correspondence with the Prime Minister, the Auditor General has generally expressed support for the renewal of the service.

[English]

The government's decision to revamp the administrative flight service puts the Challenger service on a sound footing. It is a reliable, cost effective secure transportation service for the government and fits in well with the government's commitment to operate as cost effectively as it can.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. There has been a very slight pressure of time issue that needs to be dealt with. I wonder if the House would give its unanimous consent to interrupt the statements by ministers for just a moment to allow the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to introduce a bill.

I think you would find there is consent to do that. I apologize for this interruption, particularly to members of the opposition who are going to make their responses. It will only take a second.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

IMMIGRATION ACT

Hon. Douglas Peters (for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act.

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

* * *

(1225)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Quebecois is moderately satisfied with the statement by the President of the Treasury Board on the review of the operation of the Canadian government's Challenger air service. The circumstances of this review recall a less than glorious episode in this government's history and the use of government aircraft by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Routine Proceedings

After the public outrage at the federal government's undue expenditures, the obvious step was to rationalize the expenses of members of cabinet. I want to point out that the government could have avoided taking the blame for this widespread practice of wasting public funds if it had agreed, as the Bloc Quebecois requested and still requests, to set up a public spending review committee that would scrutinize every government expenditure. By refusing to allow this exercise and by resisting change until public opinion forces it to act, the Liberal government has shown that its approach to public administration is largely improvised.

How many mini-scandals will it take for this government to finally decide to change its expensive practices? How many scandalous episodes will it take for this government to stop wasting public funds? Is there any justification for this government's excessive spending, when millions of Canadians and Quebecers are living on welfare because the government lacks the courage and the political will to promote a genuine and pro-active full employment policy?

In an article published on February 1 in *La Presse*, journalist Claude Picher said we can never criticize enough the kind of mistakes made by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, if we want the government to manage public funds in a vigilant and responsible way. I agree.

At a time when the number of unemployed is increasing daily, at a time when the national debt puts Canada among the most indebted Western countries when the federal government's spending power flies defies rationalization of government spending, the government must not be allowed to forget these incidents so that government waste in all its forms can be eliminated.

The presentation by the President of the Treasury Board reflects confidence in the government's new system for managing air transportation for its ministers. I wish I could share that confidence, but I must say that it is not easy. This government has so far failed to show the political will to cut unnecessary spending. It continues to encroach on provincial jurisdiction, it continues to make partisan political appointments and to attack social programs while maintaining tax shelters for the wealthiest people in this country. In other words, today's announcement is no guarantee that the government will immediately win the trust of the Official Opposition.

[English]

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, we in the Reform Party applaud the statement by the President of the Treasury Board regarding the completed review of the operation of the administrative flight services. The saving of some \$24 million of taxpayers' dollars is indeed good news to all Canadians.

While we acknowledge that some use by the royal family, the Governor General and the Prime Minister may be required, the important change in direction is the directive to ministers to use commercial air service as a first priority. With the Auditor General's being involved in this review, we trust an agreement has been reached on the cost per flying hour.

I would further request that this government keep Parliament informed by providing it with complete and accurate information about the flight services, as the Auditor General recommended in his 1993 report. In this way Parliament would be better able to monitor any wasteful spending and perhaps locate new areas of savings as they relate to this service.

(1230)

I would also request that the minister table the review it conducted of the flight service. The government is finally doing what the private sector started doing three and four years ago, cutting costs in order to survive in these difficult times.

While we in Reform recognize this reduction in government spending, we suggest it is only the tip of the iceberg. There are millions more taxpayers' dollars to be saved by further cuts in government spending.

We encourage the government to keep looking. It is on the right track.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

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 30th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. This is a procedural report dealing with special debates in the House and will be of interest to all hon. members.

I also have the honour to present the 31st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding membership on committees.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 31st report later this day.

The Deputy Speaker: A point of order, the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, you said that you would be ruling on my previous point

Routine Proceedings

of order at a later date. How can these bills be reported back to the House before we have heard the Chair's ruling?

The Deputy Speaker: The point of order is an interesting one. The member may not realize it but the only way the Chair can deal with the matter, I am told, is if a report is filed today. There is nothing the Chair can do to stop the report from being presented to the House. Before anything is done with respect to the bills at issue, the Chair could rule that the bills had not been properly dealt with and therefore the matter would not go further.

I very much appreciate the concern of the member. I hope my explanation has made it clear what is happening.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I present, in both official languages, the third and fourth reports of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development regarding Bill C-33, the Yukon First Nations Land Claim Settlement Act, and Bill C-34, Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act.

I would like to commend the work that was done throughout the night by the hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois and the government and the great patience they showed while dealing with these two bills.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on Bill C-35, an act to establish the department of citizenship and immigration and to make consequential amendments to other acts, with an amendment.

* * *

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that the 31st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs tabled in the House today, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

(1235)

[English]

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of 39 constituents.

The petition calls for the government to not repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way and to uphold the Supreme Court of Canada's decision of September 30, 1993, to disallow assisted suicide or euthanasia.

It is my pleasure to present this petition to the House today.

KASHMIR

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty to present, without prejudice, a petition signed by over 200 Canadians from across Canada on the situation in Kashmir.

They claim that gross human rights violations are being committed against the Kashmiri people and that the Indian government is not allowing any humanitarian aid, human rights activists or foreign journalists to operate or enter into Kashmir.

The petition calls on the Government of Canada to bring pressure on the Indian government to end its human rights violations against the Kashmiri people, to implement UN resolutions which include an impartial plebiscite under UN control whereby the Kashmiris can freely choose their own destiny, and finally, the Canadian government is called on to bring economic sanctions and an arms embargo against India until the above two objectives have been achieved.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present two petitions requesting that the Government of Canada not amend the human rights act to include the phrase sexual orientation.

The petitioners fear that such an inclusion would indicate societal approval of homosexual behaviour. The petitioners believe that the government should not legitimize this behaviour against the clear wishes of the majority.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition from just about every community in my riding of Leeds—Grenville expressing concern for the family.

They ask 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 societal approval of same-sex relationships or homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds for discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

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It is a great pleasure to present these petitions on behalf of my constituents.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 46 people from the riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who ask that Parliament uphold the present section of the Criminal Code forbidding the aiding in the commission of a suicide.

SERIAL KILLER BOARD GAME

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I also have 962 signatures to be tabled today from people calling for the ban on the serial killer board game first edition.

These names are in addition to the 111,638 names I have tabled already for a grand total of 112,600.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the duty to present a petition signed by a number of constituents from the riding of Oxford.

The petitioners ask the government to uphold section 241 of the Criminal Code which disallows doctor assisted suicide.

The petitioners further ask the government to uphold the Supreme Court decision made last September 30 to disallow doctor assisted suicide.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands, particularly of the city of Kingston, who request that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be retained without changes and enforced in order that Parliament not sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or euthanasia.

I am pleased to present this petition to the House.

* * *

(1240)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, question No. 25 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 25—**Mrs. Wayne:**

Will the government establish a national environmental technology advancement centre in Atlantic Canada following the release of a report entitled: "Environmental Industry Strategy for Canada"?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): The federal government has provided start-up funding for three National Environmental Technology Advancement Centres (NETACs) as non-profit corporations operating at arm's length from government, offering technology commercialization services to small and medium sized enterprises throughout Canada. The centres have so far obtained support from the private sector and other levels of government that exceeds the federal government's \$12 million contribution over four years.

The competitive process to establish the NETACs included an extensive consultation with the environmental industry and other interested parties. Proposals to establish centres were subjected to a comprehensive and independent evaluation resulting in the announcement of three NETACs during the summer of 1993. No proposals to establish centres were received from Atlantic Canada.

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 10 minutes, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): When the debate was interrupted the member for Madawaska—Victoria had five minutes' time remaining in her speech but I believe she completed it.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill C-43.

Today in the House of Commons we sit among seats held by over 200 newly elected representatives from all across Canada, most of whom, like me, are novices. There is no doubt that in the federal election of October 25, 1993, Canadians sent a clear message that they wanted back control of what they see as a decaying democracy, a political environment increasingly based on who you know, not what you know your constituents want.

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The whole issue of elected officials being more accountable to the people they represent has increasingly become a pressing and troubling issue for Canadians and they are demanding action.

Who could forget the now famous quote from the former leader of the Liberal Party during the election campaign. When accused of handing out patronage appointments to senior Liberal supporters he declared on national TV, "I had no choice". Who will forget the legacy of the man who accused Mr. Turner?

The last 10 years have seen more scandal, more patronage, more impropriety by elected public officials and more PR campaigns to cover up the scandals than I believe Canadian society has ever experienced. It all climaxed during the last election. Politically conscious Canadians once and for all proved that they had had enough, throwing out 75 per cent of the incumbents.

The issue behind today's debate is not simply private interests cajoling public officials. The issue transcends the question of how to control and make more transparent the access these private interests have with public officials. The issue was articulated by the Prime Minister during his speech in this House. The Prime Minister talked about trust. In this vein the Prime Minister said that in a democracy, elected officials must be accountable to the interests of all Canadians, not just the privileged few.

Such words are music to my ears. If the Prime Minister was fully aware of what he was saying, and I think he was, and if he fully intends to put into practice this populist ideology, then I am half way to returning home to my family and my medical practice.

However, as Canadians saw with the previous government, actions speak louder than words. It is one thing for politicians to accuse others of improprieties and to preach about patronage, conflict of interest and ethics. Canadians demand action, not PR.

The actions of the government, of the Prime Minister are to appoint, and I underline the word appoint, an ethics counsellor. Oh, they tell us we will review and study the legislation. This actually is Tory legislation from the previous government dealing with registering lobbyists.

(1245)

Note that although the Prime Minister says the interests of all must be considered, only the Prime Minister and not the duly elected representatives of the people through Parliament will decide who is the ethics watchdog. Only the Prime Minister,

not the duly elected representatives of the people through Parliament, will the ethics counsellor be accountable.

Given all of the public attention and the humble, trust us kind of speeches made by the government on public trust and accountability, together with the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday on appointing an ethics counsellor, I must say I am a little saddened.

Canadians demand action on this issue. Can hon. members not sense and understand that? Canadians are sick and tired of slick rhetoric and public relations. They see right through it and no wonder. They certainly have had enough experience with that type of activity over the last 15 years. Action is what they want. Action.

Canadians are no longer willing to stand idly by as outsiders while politicians line their own pockets and promote their own interests or those of their friends and relatives. If we as elected officials really and truly want to clean up this place, if we really and truly want to dispose of shady, sleazy politics which cast shadows not only over this fine city, but the quality and degree of democracy in this entire country, all of us can do it.

The vast majority of members know on any given day for any given subject what the consensus majority of their constituents believe and want. As a non-professional politician I would say that is one of our most important jobs. The other even more important job as publicly elected representatives is to represent our constituents' views.

This indeed is how I interpreted the Prime Minister's remarks. I will repeat what he said: "We must take into account the interests of all Canadians, not just the privileged few". Yet the Prime Minister is against allowing MPs in the Liberal Party to vote freely according to their constituents' views. The Prime Minister is against the idea of allowing constituents to recall their representatives if they do wrong. Are such policies not contradictory to the humble power to the people statements he made yesterday and which are printed in the Liberal red book?

I leave the answers to these questions to the existing seat holders in this Parliament. We who occupy these privileged places must eventually reconcile our consciences. As long as we represent to the very best of our abilities on each and every issue the consensus views of those individuals who are paying for us to be here, the many thousands of people in our constituencies and our parliamentary *raison d'être*, we should have no difficulties whatsoever at the end of the day saying to our constituents, our families, our children and our grandchildren that we did the best we could.

Should anything we do in whatever way cause us to contradict the consensus views of our constituents, then we must ask ourselves: Who are we doing this for? Is it for ourselves to promote our narrow self-interests? Is it for our friends or relatives to promote their narrow self-interests? Perhaps we could justify our representation in the interests of Canada, maybe Alberta, or maybe Quebec. Perhaps we could justify voting a particular way on certain issues simply in the interests

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of our party. Of course that would be good for Canada, whether Canadians know it or not.

As a parliamentarian I believe there is no cause which should take greater precedence than to do things that in our hearts we know it is what our constituents would want us to do. They know what they want. We just have to ask them more often.

What about those other noble causes: our friends, our relatives, Alberta, Quebec, Canada, our parties? I believe our constituents would tell us that by simply representing their views accurately on every issue we would automatically collectively represent what is best for Canada, our political parties, our true friends, our families, our children and our grandchildren.

(1250)

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the hon. member's speech. I still cannot figure out whether the member is for or against the bill. It is indeed most difficult to do so. I know the hon. member is in favour of families and that is very good. He is probably in favour of wholesomeness as well and that is good too.

We are dealing with a bill today as proposed by the right hon. Prime Minister and as presented in the House by the Minister of Industry. I have waited a long time for this bill.

In 1987 I was a member of the Cooper committee, the original parliamentary committee which produced the legislation that exists today. The legislation was less than perfect. It did not include the major recommendations of the committee at the time.

One of the highlights of the Cooper bill was that after three years of coming into force the legislation would be up for review. The Holtmann committee did that review. I also was a member of that committee. If members have not guessed because of the defeats last year of course I am the only survivor of either committee and a survivor of both. Therefore, I have had the opportunity to work on this issue on several occasions in the past.

The report presented last year by the Holtmann committee was not a Tory bill as the member across the way said. It was a unanimous decision of the committee which was presented and received the broad support of the House. Maybe it was not the Reform bill but I do not apologize for that. It was a report produced by the duly elected people. Maybe that concept is alien to the member who just spoke as well, but it was produced by all of us in the last Parliament and it was unanimous.

Today I stand proud because the Prime Minister in producing this legislation included most of what we asked for. Ninety per cent of what was in our report has ended up in this legislation. Furthermore, there were things I was looking for as an individual member and the rest of the committee was not willing to put in the report last year. This Prime Minister has addressed those issues as well.

For example, last year the committee recommended in recommendation 22: "That lobbyists proceed immediately to establish a professional association with an industry-wide code of ethics". I wanted that to go a lot further. I produced an amendment to that at the committee saying that in addition to what was in recommendation 22 we should also have a measure whereby if lobbyists failed to produce their own code of ethics the government would impose one on them. That is what I wanted last year.

Guess what is in the bill now? The Prime Minister said that we will impose a code of ethics through the new independent officer who will overview this system. He will develop a code and he will impose it on the lobbyists. They have no choice. The lobbyists have had years to produce such a code but have failed to do so.

I recognize some of the difficulties that industry has. A few players in there were less than desirable characters but that is not true for the majority of them. Some very honourable people are lobbyists. No one can tell me that the representation from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to my office is less than honourable.

[*Translation*]

Nobody can tell me that when people from the UPA call their MPs they do not have the best interest of their members in mind. Being a lobbyist is not in itself an undesirable activity. They are not all mean bastards. But a few rotten apples have spoiled it for everybody else.

And that is the truth. I say to the member who spoke before me that after being in Parliament for a while, he will realize that most lobbyists are honest, but a few of them have done rather suspicious things, to say the least.

(1255)

[*English*]

Where does that bring us? Last year and the year before we were studying lobbying legislation. We were studying a new conflict of interest code. The Prime Minister has found a way, through this ethics counsellor, an independent officer, to impose rules that are even stronger than what we have now on the registration of lobbyists. He has addressed the issue of conflict of interest: one for ministers, their spouses and families; on the other side for members of Parliament, once we develop a code for ourselves. That is a very important consideration. It has been done. It has been addressed.

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I want to speak briefly about the independence of the ethics counsellor. I have heard one or two members make allegations that the ethics counsellor is not independent because he reports through a minister to the House. That is not necessarily true. The assistant deputy registrar general, which is the position this officeholder holds right now, operates in a quasi-judicial manner.

The Competition Tribunal and other bodies like it report through ministers but they operate independently, quasi-independently, or at arm's length from the government. The Director of Investigations is another one. That is probably a better example of someone who operates very much in an independent manner, yet the estimates and so on report nominally through a minister. There are plenty of cases like that.

In this case the Prime Minister looked at a person who was holding an independent office of the kind I just described. He was chosen to do the job, after consultations with both opposition leaders.

Finally, once the person is appointed, the appointment has to be reviewed by a parliamentary committee under our present standing orders. Need I remind members of that. Therefore it is an independent position.

Yes, the reports as to whether or not a lobbyist breached a code will be made through the Minister of Industry, who must report to the House within 15 days of having received that report. It is not optional. That report is automatically tabled in the House.

[*Translation*]

What will be in this report? It could, for instance, tell the House about lobbyists who charged fees that were too high, and therefore suspicious. I believe it is a good initiative. It goes very far in the sense that lobbyists will be identified publicly and individually.

I am one of those who thought that lobbyists' fees should automatically be made public. It is one approach and it is the one I put forward. Today, I recognize that this information would be buried under the mountain of data released.

[*English*]

We call that the paper blizzard. If you provide enough information it is about the same as not providing any.

The Prime Minister has very cleverly designed this plan so that only those lobbyists who do controversial things will be reported to Parliament through the registrar general. This would include the fees of those lobbyists. Therefore, if lobbyists—and I assume they would generally be tier ones—do something questionable, it would be reported to Parliament.

The rules in themselves do not change parliamentarians and they do not change people. We do need good rules and we will have good rules. These proposals will be reviewed by a parlia-

mentary committee. I hope to have the honour of representing my party on that committee.

I will conclude by saying that what is most important is good ethical and moral behaviour by all of us in Parliament. I think that will then filter down to people in the public service and everywhere else and we will regain the confidence of the people as we have started to do over the months since our party has been in office.

(1300)

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to this bill to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act. This legislation will regulate the work of those who lobby government departments and agencies on behalf of their clients' interests.

I have read the bill and support a number of its provisions. Naturally, I support the fact that the bill requires lobbyists to disclose the nature of their activities. I also agree that the departments and agencies who are being lobbied must be identified. I also believe it is a good idea that the identity of individuals or corporations involved in lobbying be clearly disclosed.

These are the main provisions I see in this bill. Basically, we expected these provisions.

Other positive aspects of the bill, to my mind, are the fact that it calls for the establishment of a code of ethics governing lobbying activities and the appointment of an ethics counsellor to oversee the application of the legislation.

Generally speaking, these are the positive sides to this bill. It would be rather ridiculous if we only had negative things to say. However, if we examine the bill in relation to what has now come to be known as the Pearson Airport scandal, we see that as it is now worded, the bill would not have prevented this scandal from occurring. We would not have received any new information besides what we already have.

With this bill, we would have learned that some lobbying took place with respect to the privatization of part of Pearson Airport. That is nothing new. We would have learned that the Department of Transport was also lobbied. But we knew that already. Perhaps an inquiry would have been called by the person responsible for the application of the legislation. Well, an inquiry was held into the Pearson Airport deal. The Prime Minister appointed a special investigator who looked into the deal and released a report, which explains why certain facts came to our attention. We have learned in particular that there was something in the wind because the investigator did not have the power to force people to testify, so that we could find out what really happened.

The bill before us provides for a code of conduct which is not a statutory instrument and cannot force people to testify.

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Having reviewed the bill before us, I submit that this bill would have been of no use to us in getting to the bottom of the Pearson Airport scandal.

As you can see, this bill is seriously flawed. I will try to describe briefly the flaws I see in this bill and explain how I would like to contribute to future debates on this bill.

Flaw number one: the ethics counsellor is appointed by the Governor in Council, in other words, the government, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, as in the case of Mr. Nixon, who was appointed to investigate the Pearson Airport deal. I would say his being appointed by the government undermines his authority. As I see it, he should have been appointed by the House of Commons, just like the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. This gives him unquestioned prestige and authority.

(1305)

Flaw number two: the code of conduct is not a statutory instrument. This code, as described in the bill, seems to be little more than a pious wish list. Lobbyists are advised to behave in a certain way, but the code is not a statutory instrument. This is going to make it difficult for the person responsible for its application to summon witnesses, to question their statements, to shed light on suspicious deals. I think the non-regulatory status of the ethics code is a major weakness of the bill before us.

Another shortcoming is that lobbyists are not required to make public the amounts involved. When a lobbyist receives \$10,000 for his services, I think he is not in the same situation as if he received \$1 million or \$2 million.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who spoke before me, said that he thought of disclosing the amounts paid to lobbyists. The argument he just put forward to justify his change of mind is that there would be so much information that it would be impractical for potential lobbying researchers to dig out the figures. I think the hon. member changed his mind a little too fast because of an apparently flimsy justification. Whether there are 5,000 or 10,000 reports, Canadians interested in democracy will make an effort to look at them. Whether there are 10 or 20 people looking, if they see problems, they will be able to warn the population, and I think journalists will be smart enough to use this information. I think it would be important to know how much lobbyists received for their services.

Another element of the bill that has not been pointed out but should be in my opinion—I will be told, I am sure, that it has to do with the Income Tax Act or with other tax laws—is that the government has kept the tax deduction for lobbyists' fees. It is somewhat ironic that, on the one hand, the public is denied this information and that, on the other hand, since the people who

hire lobbyists benefit by being allowed to claim a tax deduction, this information is provided to the Department of Revenue.

It could be said that lobbyists want to have their cake and eat it too. It means that when things are not favourable, they want to keep it a secret, but when they can benefit financially, there is no problem as long as tax confidentiality is preserved. I think that this tax deduction is very questionable, especially since President Clinton of the United States, who wants to regulate lobbying, is thinking of eliminating it.

The bill also makes a dubious distinction between two types of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists paid to make representations on behalf of their clients and in-house corporate lobbyists whose main duty is to lobby departments and governments in order to obtain benefits for their companies. The bill is tougher on consultant lobbyists than on in-house lobbyists.

(1310)

But we must say that in-house lobbyists are often employed by large corporations which can afford their services and which must be accountable to the public. So I think that the lack of uniformity in the way this bill treats the various lobbyists is a major weakness which may bring the public to question the effectiveness of this bill.

Another feature I find particularly surprising is that lobbyists are not required to name the people they contacted in the agencies concerned. A report might say: "So-and-so contacted the Department of Transport, the Department of Human Resources or the Department of Justice". But we would like to know whom this person contacted. Was it the minister or a senior official? I think that it is important to find out what went on and to shed light on lobbying activities.

I shall conclude because my time is almost up. Basically, Quebecers and Canadians want to know who is lobbying. They want to know for whom the lobbying is done. They want to know how the lobbying is done. They want to know why the lobbying is done and how much it costs. I think that it is important and when the principle of this bill is considered, my party will seek to ensure that this law has all the necessary provisions so that the people of Canada and Quebec are kept informed of lobbyists' activities.

[English]

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the government's motion to send this bill, an act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act, to the committee prior to second reading.

No Canadian requires the services of a lobbyist to approach this government. I am sure that all members of this House would agree that our doors are always open to our constituents and we

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do our best to ensure that the views of those constituents are well represented in government decision making.

Moreover, all Canadians have a right to make their own views known to ministers of the crown. Every day ministers receive hundreds of letters from Canadians expressing their opinion on matters within their jurisdiction. Many Canadians make their views known directly to the department or agency of the crown that handles the issue under consideration.

I refer particularly to the farm organizations in the constituency that I represent which deal with matters such as cattle, hogs, chickens, wheat and a number of agricultural commodities that have had representatives here in Ottawa for 20 or 50 years. They have a right to do so.

This government upholds the right of Canadian citizens to deal with public officials but as we know, some Canadians do hire lobbyists. At the same time, government sometimes seeks the advice of groups and organizations in order to find out what impact its actions will have on Canadians. Our challenge is to ensure that lobbying does not discredit the democratic process.

I would like to outline why this legislation does not follow the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations to eliminate the distinctions between tier one and tier two lobbyists.

The committee had concluded that tier one and tier two lobbyists perform similar functions and recommended one definition and the same reporting and disclosure requirements for all lobbyists. This legislation on the other hand is based on the premise that lobbying performed by consultant lobbyists is different from that done by in-house lobbyists.

It has named three different categories: consultant, corporate in-house and organization in-house lobbyists. I believe that this accurately reflects the kind of lobbying activities that are going on out there and in fact prevents any kind of confusion of the issues in terms of those who are writing reports or consultant reports for individual organizations and non-profit organizations. Those are the so-called big guns, the Canadian Bankers Association for example. Those two types of activities are different.

(1315)

In other respects the legislation follows the committee's recommendations closely. It implements more detailed disclosure of all lobbyists. The question of whether increased disclosure requires the elimination of two tiers was one that the government had to examine very carefully. All organizations have told us that they agree with the need to make lobbying more transparent. No one is disputing that. They accept the need to provide more specific disclosure. They recognize that informa-

tion filed under the existing Lobbyists Registration Act is not adequate.

When it comes to the question of removing the distinction between the two tiers, representatives of corporations and organizations say that there are significant differences between their work and responsibilities and those of, as I pointed out, the consultant lobbyists in the tier one category. Corporate and organization in house lobbyists are by nature and status very substantively, fundamentally different from consultant lobbyists who operate under contract on behalf of clients.

To begin with, the activities of the in house lobbyists are already well publicized. Further, associations are informed by their members to pursue their common objectives on an ongoing basis. That is why we are requiring the association rather than the individual to file on an annual basis. Non-profit organizations will also have to disclose substantially more information, but this will not create administrative demands beyond their ability to comply.

These organizations recognize the value of greater transparency in their activities. All in house lobbyists will be required to provide annual listings of issues or specific subjects of concern, the departments or agencies they expect to contact, and in addition the communication techniques they plan to use. They will also have to provide updates as changes or new information arises or if the project is terminated. They must also provide annually a description of the organization's goals and objectives or their business activities. Corporate in house lobbyists must give the name of the parent company and any subsidiaries with a direct interest. Organization lobbyists must describe their membership.

The government wants to continue the valuable dialogue and discussions with associations and organizations in order to find out how the government's actions might affect Canadians. At the same time the bill will improve transparency of these processes by requiring again all lobbyists to disclose substantially more information. That is why I support the legislation.

The subcommittee on industry will want to look at these issues once more when it studies the legislation prior to second reading. The government assures us that it will maintain an open mind on the amendments the committee might recommend.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the motion to refer Bill C-43 to committee prior to second reading. That is significant in that a broader discussion regarding the transparency of the political process and the accountability of politicians to the Canadian public may take place before coming to the House for full debate. Therefore I am pleased to endorse the motion referring the bill to committee prior to second reading. In my support for

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the motion I will explain what I believe to be the strengths and the weaknesses of the bill and then I will suggest some changes.

There is an attempt here to make the political process more open. This is a necessary move, given that there are today few professions despised more than a political career. There is a good reason for this sorry fact. Constituents in my riding of Calgary Southeast have told me time and time again that they want to be included in the governance of their country. They want to have decisions made that reflect their wishes and that benefit their best interests. These Canadians are tired of a government that ignores them and succumbs to the special interests of powerful lobbyists. Part of the mandate that members of my party have received is to put an end to this disempowerment.

In my last town hall meeting we were discussing the issue of criminal justice reform when a man rose to express his concerns. He challenged me when he said to all in attendance that their input would not make any difference, that politicians were not interested in hearing what constituents had to say, and that if politicians did hear the message was ultimately ignored. That was pretty harsh criticism. All of us here should take note that Canadians remain frustrated and worried about where their country is going.

(1320)

It is often said that perception is reality. In the case of disempowered Canadians the opposite is true. In fact reality was perceived. My colleagues on this side of the House in the Reform Party have a comprehensive package of policy proposals that will change that cynical reality. Our proposals will give the power back to the constituents where it rightfully belongs.

The government has borrowed another idea from the Reform Party by allowing Bill C-43 to go to committee prior to second reading. It is easy therefore for me to support the motion when it has come so clearly right out of our blue book.

The motion engenders everything that Reform stands for when we speak of opening up the political system and making access to the political process more transparent. As well, the intent of the government to make amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act, the LRA, is to require lobbyists to disclose more information to the public. I applaud some of these changes for they too are right out of the Reform blue book.

Maybe I should send a copy of the blue book to the other side of the House because we hear there is confusion among Liberal backbenches as to what legislation will be brought forward next in the House. We can end their guesswork. They need only check our blue book to find out what the government plans to do next.

What is happening in the House this session is quite interesting. We have Liberals trying to pretend that they are Reformers.

They recognize that our policies are those Canadians want to see enacted in legislation. However and unfortunately we see what happens when Liberals try to be Reformers. They cannot get things quite right. They tried for criminal justice reform but because they are not Reformers they miss the big picture. The same thing is happening with Bill C-43. The Liberals are missing the big picture. Making changes to the LRA and appointing an ethics counsellor are fine as far as they go, but typically they go off track in some important respects and they definitely do not go far enough.

Bill C-43 will give the ethics counsellor the power to require lobbyists to report lobbying fees with respect to government contracts. In giving the ethics counsellor this power the bill fails to define clearly his authority. A question comes immediately to mind such as: Under what circumstances will the ethics counsellor require a lobbyist to disclose this information? The circumstances appear to be discretionary and given that the counsellor reports directly to the Prime Minister he may be subject to undue influence.

Bill C-43 is a classic example of a bill with much bark but no bite. There is a simple solution to the problem. The bill should require all lobbyists to disclose all donations and fees received over \$500 and expenditures over \$10. They should be required to file quarterly reports and to file year to date information as well. This process is currently used in the United States. It appears to be an appropriate and adequate model.

In the last Parliament another bill on the same topic died on the Order Paper. It was coincidentally also labelled Bill C-43. The reason that bill did not go anywhere was that it created another layer of bureaucracy. We were assured during the briefing on the bill yesterday that Bill C-43 would not do that. We have yet again more verbal assurance from the government. We know what happens when we get verbal assurances, do we not? We need only to look to the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to confirm that.

Bill C-43 would appoint the existing assistant deputy registrar general as the ethics counsellor. However we are told that he will keep his old job as the ADRG. Now I ask: Will he receive two salaries? He presently requires a staff of 25 to fulfil his responsibilities as ADRG. Now that he has two jobs it would seem that his staff will have a lot more work to do. There are only three possibilities here. He could do one job terribly. He could do both jobs poorly. Or, he could hire more staff in order to do both jobs well. I suspect he will want to do both jobs well. At least I hope he will.

(1325)

How much more money will his office require to fulfil his new responsibilities? Can the government tell us how much this new ethics counsellor will cost the Canadian taxpayer? Despite the

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assurances the government has given us that it will cost nothing to implement the bill I remain highly sceptical.

The Liberal government talks the good talk of opening up the political process but it does not understand what that really means. When it states that it wants to facilitate better action to the political system it demonstrates through legislation like this that it does not fully understand the magnitude of the problem. Tinkering with the LRA will only take us one small step toward regaining the confidence of Canadians. The focus of this discussion for me is the confidence of Canadians. Tinkering with the lobbyists act demonstrates that the government recognizes special interest groups, endorses special interest groups, listens to special interests, funds special interest groups, and enacts legislation to satisfy special interest groups.

The Prime Minister speaks often of restoring the trust of Canadians. Neither the bill nor the motion will allow Canadians to control the government's overspending or to control its deficit of some \$40 billion and its debt of some \$519 billion. If the government were serious about winning the trust of Canadians it would get its fiscal house in order. Let me remind members opposite who have forgotten what real access to the political process means that the last government did not know what it meant. We all know where its members are buried. It appears that this one does not either.

Real access to the political process means giving real power back to Canadians as individual constituents. Let me share with the House, as I conclude, some beliefs that will demonstrate this. The government should be guided by stated values and principles shared by Canadians in their political beliefs. We believe public policy and democratic society should reflect the will the majority of the citizens as determined by free and fair elections, referendums, and the decisions of legally constituted and representative parliaments and assemblies elected by the people. This does not include buckling to undue pressure from lobbyists.

We believe in the common sense of the common people, their right to be consulted on policy matters that are public ones before major decisions are made, their right to choose and recall their own representatives and to govern themselves through truly representative and responsive institutions, and their right to directly initiate legislation for which substantial public support is demonstrated.

Unlike the hon. member for Saint-Denis we do not believe the average voter is illiterate and cannot print his or her name on a voting list. We believe in the accountability of elected representatives to the people who elect them and that the duty of elected members to their constituents should outweigh pressure from lobbyists and special interests.

Above all else, we must listen to the voices of our constituents. We will not permit the lobby of special interest groups to narrow our agenda.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-43. We cannot represent others if we cannot control ourselves. I think that is the essence of the bill. It is very important members of Parliament, parliamentary secretaries and cabinet ministers be able to control themselves.

The essence of the bill is basically to restore integrity to our system. We can all remember going through the last election that one of the big issues was respect for members of Parliament. Clearly members of Parliament were not well respected. They were held in contempt in some cases. Some of this issue has not gone away by the mere exercise of an election. There is still a great deal of mistrust out there. It is a very good move our Prime Minister is so concerned about the issue that he personally brought the bill to the House.

I would like to discuss two specific aspects of the bill into which it is basically divided. First are changes under the Lobbyists Registration Act and second is the establishment of conflict of interest guidelines.

(1330)

Why would we need a lobbyist in the first place? Companies do have the right to have lobbyists. I know we talk about tier one and tier two lobbyists. Essentially companies would have the right to be represented to their governments.

I think the real essence of it is that this representation needs to be tempered. There must be a balance. What do I mean by a balance?

In my riding this week I dealt with a Mrs. Elizabeth Wardell of Bowmanville. She was trying to live on a disability income of \$850 while at the same time paying \$350 a month for drugs. She gets no support from our system.

I would like to argue that Mrs. Wardell has just as much right to consideration under drug patent legislation as the largest drug companies of this country. Indeed many of us may argue that she has more of a right. I will repeat again, influence must be tempered.

The most important views of this country are not those of Bay Street, James Street or Howe Street, but of Main Street, Main Street Canada. The new legislation will increase the visibility of the lobbying process.

I would like to refer to those areas of changes to the existing lobbying registration act. Lobbyists will now be required to disclose what departments and government agencies they will contact, disclose communication methods to be used and register the name of the departments and governmental agencies to be contacted.

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In essence when all is said and done the ethics counsellor will be able to decide what areas these particular lobbyists are interested in focusing in government. This will give us a concept from where this kind of activity is coming from and where it is directed at government.

Many people have argued in the House that it does not have any teeth, that it is a waste of time and it is a media show. I have discovered that here are some of the teeth in the legislation. For those who do not adhere to this process there are fines of up to \$25,000, the role of the RCMP is being strengthened by increasing the limitation period for laying charges in summary proceedings from six months to two years. If lobbyists knowingly make false or misleading statements they could be liable to a fine of up to \$100,000 and a prison term of two years.

These are very serious charges. These are very serious results of not abiding by this legislation. I think very clearly the government is very interested in cleaning up our act.

Through these changes I believe that we will start to temper the views of lobbyists and special interest groups but, more important, give government back to the people.

I would like to discuss a second aspect of this legislation which is conflict of interest. I am a chartered accountant. I have been enrolled in the Institute of Chartered Accountancy since 1974. We have a code of ethics. Most professional organizations have a code of ethics. If you break it you are out.

Why not in this House have a code of ethics? That would assume we are professionals. I will give a quick definition of professional. It is one who values the interest of their clients over those of their own personal interest.

In reality what conflict of interest guidelines and ethics counsellor are attempting to do is make the people of Canada our clients, to put the importance of our clients way above our own personal interests.

This is what the Prime Minister means when he is clear to the commitment of duty, but the interest of the electorate must come before those of ourselves.

I am sure many members of Parliament have had the same kind of problem from being a respected professional to going out and being a politician. I remember an incident at a spring fair in the last election. People would come up to me and say: "So, you are a crook too". Nobody has ever in my life referred to me as a crook. Because I had changed my cloak, if you will, and had suddenly become a "politician" aspiring to be a member of this House, I was thought of as a crook. In some ways that kind of spirit is still out there. We have to address the root causes of that. We have to set standards in this good House.

(1335)

This section has teeth as well. I would like to refer to section 20 of the guidelines. This refers to parliamentary secretaries and cabinet ministers: "Guest hospitality, other benefits, including those described in section 21, that could influence public office holders in their judgement and performance of official duties and responsibilities shall be declined".

I just picked that out of interest. I wonder how many of our parliamentary secretaries and the cabinet ministers are going to be looking under their Christmas tree this year, wondering whether these things have to be returned based on this legislation. I think it is very real. It is a very real influence.

To bring the two aspects together, one being the conflict of interest aspect and the second being the reform to the Lobbyists Registration Act, the ethics counsellor basically has a number of functions. One is to develop a code of conduct in consultation with interested parties. A second is to have the powers to investigate possible breaches of the code of conduct.

The most important aspect of all is to make a public report as a result of this investigation. This will be done once a year. When I saw this I immediately thought of the Auditor General. I thought of the great opportunity for the opposition parties to make political hay from this. That is a possibility, a good possibility.

Imagine a government dedicated to integrity and changing the system that would invoke legislation of this kind which will only serve to possibly embarrass it. We can clearly see the strong commitment our party has to changing the integrity and the office of elected officials.

In conclusion, under these revised, specific codes of ethics, they will clean up our system. The only problem with these things is some people will say they do not go far enough, that we could have extended it more specifically to all members of Parliament.

The people who are exempted from this legislation are the opposition parties. There is no code of ethics for them. There is no commitment to a higher standard for them. There is no professional enrolment or engagement for them. Maybe they would like to bring forward their own code of ethics.

In any case, this is a tremendous move in the right direction for the people of Canada, empowering the people of Canada to bring back government and the voices of the people of Canada to this House.

[Translation]

Mr. Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have left?

The Deputy Speaker: Three minutes, unfortunately.

Mr. Bergeron: Three minutes.

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[English]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. There has been some consultation. I am not sure whether it is a conclusion yet. Perhaps while I am making this proposal, it will give further time for the House to consider it.

I would like to seek agreement that consideration for this particular bill be extended. In other words, that government business be extended by one-half hour, and that at the conclusion of the half hour the issue be disposed of, this particular item be disposed of at that time.

Second, that in exchange for doing that, so as to not inconvenience any members, we would agree by unanimous consent to have only two speakers at Private Members' Hour, dealing with the item put on the Order Paper by the hon. member for Kamloops. Only he and one member for the Reform would speak on that particular private members' item.

(1340)

At the conclusion of that debate, the initiative of the member for Kamloops would be withdrawn and referred to a parliamentary committee. I do not know whether there is consent for the parliamentary committee on agriculture to be more specific. I know this is a lot to digest in a very few seconds.

It is done to accommodate members of one party who would prefer to speak on this bill and forgo the time for speaking on the other one. The ultimate effect essentially is not to lengthen the time of the sitting, that the House would terminate at exactly the same time. I do not know whether that suits hon. members.

Perhaps there is a request to repeat all of that. Of course I am willing to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps we could split that in half. Is there unanimous consent to extend debate for half an hour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to the second part of the deputy whip's motion that only two members speak and that the matter be referred to the standing committee on agriculture?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you have listed the first and third items. There was one in the centre that was not addressed. It was the issue that this government order be disposed of at the conclusion of the 30 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: I sort of assumed that was the case. Is it also agreed that it would be disposed of?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Stephane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, unless I am mistaken, I do have ten minutes to make my speech. Thank you very much. I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-43.

When we looked at the Pearson Airport deal, I think we were all hoping that a bill would be tabled to tighten up the Lobbyists Registration Act, and are pleased that the government decided to propose this legislation, even though it is, in our opinion, far from being enough.

I have rather mixed feelings about this bill. On the one hand, I agree that it is a first step in tightening up the provisions concerning lobbyists but, on the other hand, I feel that the proposed measures are not enough. I will discuss this more in detail later on.

Earlier this morning, the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria said that lobbies were an essential component of our democratic system. She may be right, but we must ensure that lobbying does not corrupt the democratic process, and I think this is the goal of a bill designed to better monitor the role and the work of lobbyists.

The hon. member for Jonquière was quite right when he said that the bill, in its present form, would not have prevented what we refer to as the Pearson Airport scandal. In fact, it is very symptomatic to see that the government waited until the conclusion of the debate on the bill concerning compensation to those involved in the Pearson Airport deal, before finally tabling its legislation on lobbyists.

This bill is essential because, if we look at the American experience—which we can observe from up close—we see that lobbyists in the United States have gained such power that, in a way, they control several decisions made by the White House and the Congress. A number of positive points must be emphasized in Bill C-43. First of all, the appointment of an Ethics Counsellor. I think the principle is fully justified and that there was an obvious need to appoint an Ethics Counsellor. We also find it very positive that this Ethics Counsellor is being given investigative powers.

(1345)

As the Leader of the Official Opposition said yesterday, we fully support Mr. Wilson's appointment to the position of Ethics Counsellor. Mr. Wilson has had a highly respected career; he is a very honourable man, and we think he is fully qualified for this position.

We note the government's intention to establish a parliamentary committee whose mandate would be to develop a code of ethics for senators and members of Parliament. We also note its intention to expand and tighten the code of ethics for public

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office holders, namely ministers and senior public servants; also, its intention to establish a code of ethics for lobbyists.

I personally feel it is entirely appropriate that the Ethics Counsellor be responsible for administering these three codes of ethics. This will eliminate the scattering of responsibilities. I do feel, however, that there are a number of shortcomings in the bill. First of all, the Ethics Counsellor will not be appointed by and accountable to Parliament, but rather by the Governor in Council.

While the Ethics Counsellor is required to present an annual report to Parliament, and while Parliament must periodically review this legislation, the fact remains that, because he is appointed by the Governor in Council—therefore by Cabinet and the Prime Minister—it is difficult to establish a clear administrative link and reporting relationship; in my opinion, this is all the more incongruous in that the registrar will continue to report to the Department of Industry. I think we should ask why the Ethics Counsellor is appointed by the Governor in Council, therefore, by the Prime Minister. If we want the Ethics Counsellor to be entirely credible and as unbiased as possible for this work, which would include dealing with possible conflicts of interest involving Cabinet members, I think this appointment should not be made by the Governor-in-Council, representing the wishes of Cabinet, but rather by Parliament itself.

According to the red book, and I quote, “the Ethics Counsellor will be appointed after consultation with the leaders of all parties in the House of Commons”.

I cannot deny that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leader of the Reform Party were informed of Mr. Wilson’s appointment, and I do not deny that we are entirely in favour of this appointment, as I noted earlier. But, given the measures provided for in this bill, we must wonder about the attitude subsequent governments might take. Would subsequent governments pay just as much attention to the opposition’s point of view on the appointment of an ethics counsellor? This is what we are questioning with respect to the prospect of designation by the Governor in Council.

We must also deplore the fact that the distinction between the two types of lobbyists is maintained. I will, with your permission, refer again to the red book that has been quoted so many times since the beginning of this session because, of course, the government boasts about this process of transparency in parliamentary and government institutions it will undertake in order to restore public trust in our parliamentary institutions and our government.

So the red book says, among other things, and I quote: “To increase the transparency of the government’s relations with lobbyists, and to give effect to some of the measures described here, a Liberal government will implement the unanimous June 1993 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on

Consumer and Corporate Affairs respecting the Lobbyists Registration Act”.

Well, the first recommendation of the Holtmann report suggests that, and I quote “The distinction between Tier I and Tier II lobbyists be eliminated”. But it is maintained. How do you explain that a lobbyist working for a large corporation can have two months to file a return while consultant lobbyists have only ten days? What is the basis for such different treatment?

(1350)

We should not differentiate on the basis of status, but rather according to the type of activity. Someone who plays the piano is a pianist; someone who lobbies is a lobbyist. Whatever status they have, all lobbyists perform the same activity and we should not keep this artificial difference.

I also believe that we should have done away with the fiscal exemptions for lobbying expenses, something which, by the way, was suggested by the Minister of Transport. These exemptions mean that the government is subsidizing the work undertaken by private interests to influence the decision-making process.

I believe that direct referral to committee, which virtually does away with second reading, something we regret a little, has a positive aspect in that it allows members to voice their opinion on the principle of the bill. In committee, the Bloc Québécois will try to prevent this bill from becoming an empty shell, a mere cosmetic operation. The Bloc Québécois will co-operate with the government, but it also expects the government to be open and receptive to the constructive suggestions that might be made by the various political parties in the House.

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to speak to this motion to send Bill C-43 to committee.

I cannot think of a type of legislation that is more important to all members of the House of Commons. I like to think that this is the kind of thing I was sent by the people in my riding, to do in the House.

I took notes of two things as this debate progressed. One is the tremendous co-operation that has been shown by members of the opposition parties to examine this bill very candidly and to look for ways to improve the bill and to find deficiencies. I also took note of the minister’s statement this morning that he is willing to entertain any kind of bona fide, progressive suggestion, any kind of amendment.

I do have something I would like to add to this bill as an amendment. It has to do with a subject that is of great interest to me and to other members of the House and that is special interest groups.

For the last three months I have made it my particular interest to examine the past practices of governments funding special interest groups, particularly government funded advocacy groups. These are really another type of lobby as we have heard already in the House.

I have looked very carefully into these groups. They are usually non-profit organizations. They are usually umbrella organizations that claim to represent hundreds of thousands of Canadians and hundreds of other organizations.

One of the very great difficulties with this situation where organizations like this are funded is that the nature of the law, both the Access to Information Act and the laws governing Revenue Canada make it impossible for a member of Parliament or a member of the press to independently examine the books of these special interest groups. Even their applications are protected under the Access to Information Act. The balance sheets they present annually are as they choose to present them. They are not subject to close examination unless by chance government audit. We have no control in that respect.

Even if these special interest groups, be they advocacy groups or other special interest groups are audited, it would be found that the majority of them are incorporated companies. It means that the principals of those companies which are not accountable for how they spend government money, are not accountable when the auditor comes by and perhaps finds something very much amiss.

(1355)

I do not want to name any particular groups. I am deliberately being general. This goes even beyond that. In my research I have looked at many government funded advocacy groups that are up front, but among the special interest groups there are many groups that ostensibly are using the money for charitable or non-profit purposes. Because we cannot independently examine their books, we do not know whether they are using some of this money for lobbying purposes. We have no control. We may have lobbying with government money under the table, shall we say, and this is a very serious concern.

I would like to address this problem with two amendments to Bill C-43. We are talking about special interest advocacy groups, probably over 100, and we are talking about millions of taxpayers' dollars. Mr. Speaker, I hope you will give your due attention to the wording of these two proposed amendments. I have worked very hard on them. I have to say I am not skilled in preparing amendments and I am sure the staff can do better than I.

The first amendment I would suggest is that for individuals or organizations defined in the act as lobbyists it shall be an offence to use money received from government to lobby

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government. That is the first amendment and would take care across the board of all these umbrella groups that are taking money from the taxpayer and using it to lobby government, which at the very least is a conflict of interest.

On the other hand, we do not want to discourage legitimate charities or legitimate non-profit organizations from lobbying government when situations arise that affect them very closely. I would suggest that the Canadian Cancer Society certainly would want to speak to the government on the issue of the price of cigarettes and similar health issues. We have to provide that they can still lobby to some degree while shutting off those special interest groups that are secretly lobbying.

The second amendment I propose is this. For individuals or organizations that are not lobbyists as defined in the act it shall be an offence to use more than 10 per cent of money received from the government to lobby government. In this way we have taken care of the legitimate concerns of charities while actually putting teeth in the law for those who would abuse the privilege of receiving government money for acts of charity and use it instead to lobby for special interest purposes.

I hope that when the committee considers Bill C-43 they will also consider these two proposals.

I would like to just touch very quickly on a few deficiencies in the act. Some members of the Bloc have mentioned them. I have difficulty with the one tier, two tier system, but for different reasons than I have heard here. The one tier system is defined as an individual, whereas the two tier system is basically organizations and corporations. The one tier individual actually is required to declare more than the tier two organization.

The difficulty is many lobbyists incorporate themselves as companies so rather than being individuals they can incorporate and become tier two. We need to very carefully plug up that problem because we want to make sure that the individual consultant type lobbyist is fully governed by the restrictions and limitations that we wish to put him under.

I have one other difficulty. I have a problem with the ethics counsellor and the concept of an ethics counsellor in one respect. He is empowered to investigate and bring forward the results of his investigation to Parliament.

The problem is that nothing in the act indicates whether the ethics counsellor, when he gets his evidence, whether that evidence is going to be subject to the restrictions of the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act.

In other words, you could have a situation where the ethics counsellor gets third party information which he is not allowed to disclose as a result of the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act.

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(1400)

You would have a situation in which he would be investigating but we, the parliamentarians, would not be able to see a full and candid report.

Therefore I really urge the committee to look very carefully at the implications of these two acts, the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act, and make sure that however it is done the ethics counsellor is able to report as fully as possible on his findings before this House.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I want to acknowledge that the bill entitled An Act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act is a step in the right direction. It imposes additional requirements on lobbyists and provides the public with a better understanding of the role they play.

This bill is, however, nothing but a watered-down version of the red book commitment to implement the June 1993 report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations respecting the review of the Lobbyists Registration Act.

What kind of promises were contained in the red book? The first commitment made was to eliminate the distinction between Tier I and Tier II lobbyists. The government has not followed up on this undertaking, which means that there will continue to be two categories of lobbyists to whom different rules apply. Yet, the Liberal members were the ones who demanded that the distinction be dropped during the discussions on the registration of lobbyists in the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

Here is what the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell had to say about this matter on February 2, 1993: “There is a concern about the in-house lobbyists, about the fact that we are not asking as much information from them as from others; namely, we are not asking the topic about which they are lobbying. Does this not make it easy for someone to hire a Tier I lobbyist and merely put him on the payroll? In other words, you convert him into a Tier II and you put him on the payroll for a year because you know this person will be lobbying for the drug patents act or some other controversial topic, for example. By putting him or her on the payroll, you effectively reduce the information that you have to divulge”.

The second commitment made was to establish a code of ethics governing conflict-of-interest situations involving public figures, for example, members of Parliament or Cabinet and senior officials. The government has only partly fulfilled this particular commitment since it has not given this future code regulatory status, which would have made it more legally binding. Therefore, any attempt to deceive will be met merely

with a reprimand, not with legal or criminal sanctions. This government is harder on young offenders than on friends of the system and the parliamentarians who are at their beck and call.

A third promise made in the red book was to eliminate tax deductions for lobbying expenses. Canadians must realize that they have elected 295 members of Parliament to represent them and that day after day, opposition members question the government in the hope of getting answers which, when they do come, are only partial, while Parliament Hill bustles with 2,800 lobbyists who call the shots with taxpayers' money. Let us recall the role played by lobbyists in what has come to be known as the Ginn Publishing and Pearson Airport scandals. In his report on the latter scandal, Mr. Nixon noted that the lobbyists played a prominent part in attempting to affect the decisions that were reached, going far beyond the acceptable norms of “consulting”. That is totally unacceptable.

Also, nothing in this bill provides for lobbying expenses to be made public, even as part of an inquiry. Yet, such information is extremely useful in assessing the activities of lobbyists. On that subject, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell stated on February 23, 1993: “I do not agree that knowing how much is spent on lobbying is of interest neither to those involved nor to the public”. In the case of the Pearson scandal, it is in the public interest to know who are the lobbyists who worked on that deal and how much they were paid to do it. It is even more important because in this case as in many others, former high-ranking government officials are now selling their knowledge of the inner workings of government and using their former contacts. It is the revolving door approach.

(1405)

In the case of Pearson Airport, the scandal is overwhelming. On the one hand, lobbying fees were deducted from the taxes paid by the corporations involved in the attempted privatization of Pearson Airport, and on the other, taxpayers will be hit a second time since, under clause 10 of Bill C-22, those corporations will be compensated.

Still on the issue of lobbying fees, the government allows conditional fees to be paid by people who hire lobbyists if and when they succeed in getting certain favours from the government for their client, such as a contract, for instance. On February 16, 1993, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell stated very clearly, and I quote: “I believe that conditional fees should be banned”.

The fourth undertaking in the red book was to reveal the players in the government decision-making process by asking various questions, for example: Who could be influenced? Which lobbyist requested a meeting with which minister? Which public servant met with which lobbyist to discuss which issue? What was the particular item on the agenda, or what issue did the parties discuss? Was it a bill, an amendment, a subsidy, a

regulation, a policy, a program, or the awarding of a contract? Here again, the promise has not been kept.

This is probably the most disappointing aspect of the bill. Indeed, merely requiring that all lobbyists disclose the government department or agency contacted is clearly unsatisfactory. Real reform should help us find out the names of the people lobbyists are trying to influence. While in opposition, a lot of the current ministers, cabinet and government members were very harsh with lobbyists, but now they seem to have changed their minds. Maybe because lobbyists are hanging around their offices all the time.

For example, in June of 1993, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell said that the public had the right to know who is doing what to whom and for how much money. At the time, he thought it was unfortunate that these considerations were not included in the legislation.

He also said, on February 16, 1993, that he was one of those who favoured a registration system as long as loopholes were eliminated and the parties concerned required to provide useful information. He went on to say that the system could be improved by providing accurate, concise and valuable information.

In conclusion, the Liberal government was obviously under pressure from the lobbyists and from friends who hire them. This shows, I think, that we probably should have started by amending the political party financing legislation in order to be able to examine quietly and without undue pressure the issue of lobbyists, unlike what seems to have happened with this bill. I hope that the working committee will take note of these recommendations.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 2.10 p.m. and pursuant to a special order made earlier today, it is my duty to put the question on the motion to the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

Private Members' Business

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

(1410)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops) moved that Bill C-211, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cattle rustling and range cattle) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all say thanks to the members of the House for agreeing unanimously to refer the subject matter of this bill to the standing committee on agriculture.

Thanks also to my colleague from the neighbouring constituency, again very much part of cattle country in central British Columbia, for agreeing to second this private member's initiative and also to acknowledge my intern from the University of Michigan, John, who has worked so hard to prepare an awful lot of research material to make this bill possible in this presentation today.

The bill does really two things. Acknowledging the fact that cattle thievery or cattle rustling has become a very serious issue not only in western Canada but throughout Canada over the last number of years. One of the reasons it has become such a significant issue and is escalating in its nature is the minimal fines attached to the situation if anyone is ever caught rustling cattle.

We would all appreciate that to catch somebody rustling range cattle is not an easy situation. It is difficult. Those are wide ranges particularly in western Canada. A lot of cattle are simply also grazing in community pastures and for someone to come along late in the day or in the evening and capture a few cattle or in some cases to shoot and slaughter cattle on the range is something that unfortunately is increasing.

To give members an idea of how serious the courts take this, in a recent case in British Columbia involving an individual from the community of Lytton, British Columbia who was caught rustling cattle, stealing cattle and given a one-year suspended sentence, he had to pay \$300 as a reflection of the seriousness of this crime. The stolen property in this case was cattle.

What kind of signal would that send to people who may be caught up in this objectionable activity? If one gets caught, one might get a \$300 fine. To put that in some context, the value of cattle these days, I suppose one could generalize and say that some cattle might be sold on the market for \$1,500 and others for less, but an average price per cow would be about \$1,000.

Private Members' Business

I could quote many others where the penalty imposed was inconsequential. Consequently the message that is sent is one that almost condones this activity.

I notice a number of my friends from Alberta are in the House and I will quote some Alberta statistics. Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate this, a representative from the province of Alberta.

To an idea of the seriousness of this, in 1990, 1,538 cattle were reported stolen as well as 138 horses. In 1991, it was 1,515 cattle reported stolen and 156 horses. In 1992, 1,230 cattle were reported stolen and 172 horses. In 1993, 1,427 cattle were reported stolen as well as 98 horses.

In British Columbia from the area that I represent, approximately 200 cattle a year go missing. They call it missing and in all cases it is agreed that these cattle have been stolen or rustled. Many cattle are shot and butchered on the spot. Remains are located later. Many cattle are shot and simply abandoned. These are the unscrupulous types, presumably using someone's cattle for target practice.

Again, the use of firearms as part of this is a concern to many of us. This legislation addresses that as well.

To say that these numbers actually reflect the state of this problem is misleading. This is the thin edge of the wedge. This is sort of the tip of the iceberg. Ranchers are reluctant to report cattle from their herds being stolen or rustled because it would indicate that their territories are vulnerable to this kind of activity.

(1415)

The RCMP are responsible for various stock divisions and it says the ratio is probably 1:20. For every cow which is reported stolen there probably are 20 which have actually been stolen but have not been reported. It is partly because they do not want to publicize these events which perhaps would encourage others to participate in this type of easy illegitimate activity. The concern also is that once you start this process where does it end.

Interestingly enough, in attaching finances to this, in the central part of British Columbia we are talking of about one-third of a million dollars annually which is lost to cattle rustling that we know of. The figure is well over \$1 million in Alberta. Of course if you use the 1:20 ratio we are talking many, many millions of dollars which cattlemen lose.

When you consider that many cases are small cattle operations, if they lose 20 or 30 cows, that is it for their profits for the year. That might make the difference between making the payments on their loans or not. It is that type of seriousness.

There is another element which I think you in particular, Mr. Speaker, will find interesting. That is the number of cattle that are stolen and the number of cattle that seem to be stolen. This is determined by brands during cattle sales. During cattle sales brand inspectors make sure the brand on an animal belongs to the person selling that piece of livestock. Interestingly enough there is a wide discrepancy in this situation. When the cattle is sold if that ownership is not clear in terms of the brand allocation, the moneys will go to the actual brand holders.

Here is an example. Moving a little bit further east, in Saskatchewan in 1987 money was redirected on nearly 800 head of cattle. In 1990, 2,239 cattle were identified as having ownership different from the person actually selling the animal. Therefore the money was rerouted back to the legitimate owner.

There is a whole element of literally thousands and thousands of livestock being sold when for all intents and purposes they have been rustled and stolen. Of course people shrug their shoulders and say: "Well I guess they just wandered in with the rest of my herd. I am sorry I missed that one". One of the reasons for this activity is that the judges, the courts and the justice system do not take this seriously at all.

Bill C-211 suggests that we do two things. One is that we impose a serious fine making it an indictable offence for anyone caught using firearms while participating in cattle rustling or cattle thievery. It suggests that we have a minimum fine as well.

When it comes to fining individuals we often have a maximum fine but we do not have a minimum fine. If a person is out there shooting cattle or in a position where they could shoot cattle or packing a firearm when participating in this thievery we should have zero tolerance for this. As a matter of fact I suppose you can make the case that we should have zero tolerance for this when it comes to people as well.

We should just say: "Listen, if you are participating in a criminal act and you are in possession of a firearm, even if you do not use that firearm there is an automatic sentence of 10 years on top of anything else you will receive". There would be no plea bargaining available, just an automatic sentence in terms of possessing a firearm.

Perhaps a first step is to have this associated with animals. It seems odd that we would have a tougher offence when we are dealing with shooting animals or carrying firearms around animals than we would around people, but my bill deals with cattle rustling today. Perhaps I could bring in another amendment to the Criminal Code dealing with human beings later.

Therefore step one is that we would identify that using firearms in cattle thievery or livestock thievery—we are talking about horses and I suppose now in your part of the country, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about alpacas, llamas, ostriches and all

sorts of exotic types of livestock—but in this case it just refers to an animal and thievery.

If found guilty of cattle thievery the imprisonment term would be extended up to 15 years. That would send a clear signal. However I would like to suggest that when the matter is referred to the standing committee on agriculture for consideration we actually give thought to a minimum fine as well. A person charged with cattle rustling and found guilty would receive a minimum sentence. It would send out a clear signal to all folks participating in these kinds of activities that we will not tolerate it.

(1420)

We cannot have an RCMP agent on every square hectare of range land in the country. We cannot have a neighbourhood watch very easily out on the range. We are simply not going to tolerate people who go out of their way to steal other people's property such as livestock or shoot other people's livestock. I think this would send that kind of signal.

I know there are many other points to make, but we will now have an opportunity to pursue the matter in the standing committee on agriculture. Once again I thank my colleagues for their support. I look forward to hearing the comments of my hon. friend in the Reform Party who will speak next.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in support of Bill C-211. I thank my hon. friend and colleague from Kamloops. When I was young I had the good fortune of growing up in the member's constituency. We ranched a fair ways in, in country called the Dead Man. We used to like to think it got its name from what happened to rustlers in those days. Unfortunately that is not how it got its name or maybe it is fortunate, but that is another story.

I can speak on the subject from experience. We ranched between 50 and 60 miles in from the Kamloops highway on a back road and we lost cattle through rustling and butchering. There is nothing worse than coming in from a long trip to Kamloops, which in those days was about a three and a half or four hour trip one way, pulling into the yard, coming through the gate and seeing half a carcass lying there. We knew we had been hit.

As the hon. member said in his speech we did not report it because we would have left ourselves wide open for other people to go in there. They would know when we were in and when we were out. We kept it as quiet as possible and tried to find out through our own means who had been in there. We asked neighbours if they happened to be around. Unfortunately our closest neighbour was five or six miles away as the crow flies. We did not get to see our neighbours that much. It was not only on our range; it was happening everywhere.

Private Members' Business

When we talk about cattle, people have a tendency to think about hamburgers and McDonald's. It is a livelihood. It has been a livelihood in the country for years. It helped make the country. The act of rustling has also cost many ranchers their livelihood. Ranching is not big business like some people tend to think. Sometimes it is make it or break it on 10, 15 or 20 steers, depending on whether or not we have a good winter or we have to work elsewhere to support the ranch the next year to help get us through.

Today it is not uncommon to lose 10, 20 or 25 head at one time. They move in today with cattle trucks; they are in and they are out; they are quick. They are on government range. The ranchers pay for a lease on the range. It is up to ranchers to patrol it as much as possible. In most cases they do have range patrols.

I come back to the problem of when rustlers are caught. In most cases the sentence is a joke. It is a slap on the wrist; maybe a \$300 fine after they have already ripped us off for \$15,000, \$20,000 or \$30,000. What does this tell us? As the hon. member said, if they are not going to be charged for it they will just keep coming back.

At one time we painted the word cow on one of our cows. We went to town and when we came back the cow had been shot. The worst of it was it was not a Hereford, it was not a black Angus, it was our milk cow, a Jersey. Half of it was still lying there. They just took what they thought were the best chunks of meat and left.

It does not seem to matter what a rancher does to try to protect his herd. The laws are not on the books to help him protect it. This bill introduced by the hon. member for Kamloops goes a long way. I have one regret about this. I wish he had been around when we were ranching and could have introduced this. It makes a lot of sense.

We cannot afford to keep on going this way. The cost is phenomenal to ranchers and has to be built into the cost of selling the herds. Today we seem to have more laws on the books for the ranchers when they want to trail the herd out to market than there are for the rustler who comes in to steal the herd. Our priorities have gone backward.

Maybe the oldtimers had it right. At one time it was almost a capital offence to steal cattle or horses. It was people's livelihood and the way we survived.

This bill goes a long way toward toughening up something that has been let slide for many years. I hope every member in the House supports this bill and I cannot wait to see it get into the agriculture committee because that is the fastest way to move it through. Again I thank the hon. member for Kamloops.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly under the special order made earlier today Bill C-211 is withdrawn from the Order Paper and the subject matter of the bill is referred to the standing committee on agriculture.

It being 2.30 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 2.26 p.m.)

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