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Wednesday, February 22, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 22, 1995

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

The Speaker: My colleagues, today is a rather special day in our Parliament. I want to explain how we are going to proceed.

We will have statements by the leaders of various parties. Then we will have the introduction of our new members of Parliament who will be joining us today, following which will be statements.

[*Translation*]

We will then move on to Oral Questions. The Prime Minister has the floor.

* * *

TRIBUTE TO HON. LUCIEN BOUCHARD

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this House, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to the Leader of the Opposition. All members of this House and all Canadians salute the courage and determination shown by the Leader of the Opposition throughout his recent ordeal.

I also wish to pay tribute to Mrs. Audrey Bouchard and her children for their support for him during this very difficult time, which certainly played a major part in helping the opposition leader recover so quickly.

[*English*]

I would like to thank all Canadians, despite the differences of opinion we might have, who have shown to the Leader of the Opposition their sympathy and moral support in praying for him to recover his health in as short a time as possible.

[*Translation*]

Since it is one of his fondest wishes, I would like to say to the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of all members of this House: Welcome back to the shop.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Reform members, including myself, I wish to welcome back the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

We parliamentarians are all professional politicians. Although, in the course of our public lives, we often express heartfelt and varied opinions on matters of public policy, we remain human beings united by our shared love of life and health and by our vulnerability to disease and tragedy.

When the hon. member became ill, all members of this House shared a feeling of solidarity because of their common concern for their colleague.

Those of us who believe that the ultimate secret of life and death rests in the hands of the Supreme Being prayed for his recovery.

When we learned that the hon. member was out of danger at last, we shared feelings of relief and gratitude.

(1405)

It is a tribute to the hon. member's courage and determination that all members of the House put their differences aside and showed their solidarity through their concern for his recovery and well-being.

I therefore would like to express these feelings today by welcoming the hon. member back to the House and wishing him excellent health in the future.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, upon the return of the leader of the Bloc Québécois to the House of Commons, I would like to say, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, that we are glad to see him back in good health.

The news of the devastating disease that struck the leader of the Bloc Québécois came as a terrible shock. Beyond all our differences, compassion is the bond that unites us.

[*English*]

I would like to offer my best wishes to the leader of the Bloc Québécois and to his courageous family.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Welcome back, Lucien.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these past two months have taught me something about this House and its members. They taught me that one can get homesick for this place.

Tributes

I return here with feelings of gratitude, with pride and confidence. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for your constant concern throughout this difficult time. I also wish to mention the courtesy and understanding shown by the Prime Minister. His heart is in the right place. I am deeply grateful to the ministers and to the other party leaders and members of all parties who supported me with their messages of encouragement and, in so doing, perpetuated a tradition of compassion that is a credit to this House. I applaud this ability to rise above the many differences we may have, even in the midst of a debate that is about the future of Canada, no less.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise to you that during the anxious days that brought me these expressions of sympathy, I felt very close to all of you.

At this point I want to thank from the bottom of my heart my friends and colleagues in the Bloc Québécois caucus. They behaved like a family that, when one of its members is hurt, summons the courage and dignity to carry on. I want to say how much I appreciate their wonderful solidarity and the tremendous job they have done during my absence.

I am also deeply grateful for the thousands of expressions of encouragement I received from my fellow citizens. I must say I felt strengthened and comforted by their prayers and best wishes.

My illness gave me first-hand knowledge of how our health care system works. I have the greatest admiration for and am deeply grateful to the doctors and other caregivers at the Saint-Luc Hospital in Montreal who saved my life and those at the rehabilitation institute in Montreal who helped me learn to walk again. Their dedication and competence have reinforced my commitment to protecting and improving our social programs.

(1410)

[*English*]

And so today we answer the call of duty and again take up the mandate that was given to us by the people.

Yes, I have been looking forward to this moment since a certain day in December when technology and destiny combined to give me another chance. If the rallying cry of democracy is stand up and be counted, I respectfully ask to be counted.

I have so much to remember, the sympathy and compassion from this and every other quarter, from Quebec and from the whole of Canada, from friends and strangers alike. In such circumstances who is really a stranger? I remember a yellow rose, a gracious gesture by a gracious lady.

In our moments of anguish my family and I were not alone. This we shall never forget. Our gratitude goes to all of those who offered us their thoughts and their prayers.

We come back to this Chamber with a renewed hunger for life. Time is so precious and there is so much left to do. And so we will concentrate on the more important things and give the best we can. Quebecers and Canadians alike can expect your faithful servant to remain true to his convictions and values, for our convictions may clash, as they do and will, but we share the same values of tolerance and respect for democracy; values that are tragically in short supply in a large part of the world. Where others fight with bullets, we fight with ballots, with arguments, with facts, with emotions and it should always be with respect for those who believe differently from us.

Let us never forget our common humanity. Let us never disallow our common need to reach out to one another so that in our times of suffering, of solitude, even despair, we can take comfort in the knowledge that in spite of our differences we share the same compassion.

There will no doubt be heated exchanges in the weeks and months ahead. At the end of the day we will remember the intensity of our debates and the passion that suffused them. It is my fondest hope that we will also recall that civility prevailed and that outside this Chamber men and women of every persuasion will proudly be able to say they profoundly disagreed but they were, all of them, men and women of peace and honour.

[*Translation*]

I also mentioned the word pride, and indeed I am proud to be standing here with you in this House, where we were sent by our fellow citizens.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard: I also used the word confidence, and indeed I have the greatest confidence in the democratic and responsible resolution of the issues before us.

I was able to observe how compassionate and generous our fellow citizens from English Canada can be. Who would not have been moved by their expressions of sympathy? I realize this does not mean English Canada will be converted to Quebec's sovereignist option, any more than I will renege on my political commitments. On the contrary, these past few weeks during which I had time to think about these issues have strengthened my sovereignist position. However, I am confident that sovereignists and federalists can discuss their options with dignity, without impugning each other's motives.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me, with the consent of the government and the other parties, these few minutes to address the House. However, after expressing these worthy sentiments, we must go back to the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate. In fact, I was a little worried earlier that the Prime Minister's kind words would have a disarming effect on me. I am aware that I will have to revert to a more robust approach in my first questions to the Prime Minister later on.

S. O. 31

(1415)

[English]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election of Mr. Mauril Bélanger, member for the electoral district of Ottawa—Vanier.

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[Translation]

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mauril Bélanger, member for the electoral district of Ottawa—Vanier, introduced by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the Hon. Herb Gray.

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NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: My colleagues, I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Denis Paradis, for the electoral district of Brome—Missisquoi.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Denis Paradis, member for the electoral district of Brome—Missisquoi, introduced by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the Hon. Alphonso Gagliano.

* * *

(1420)

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mrs. Lucienne Robillard, for the electoral district of Saint—Henri—Westmount.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Lucienne Robillard, member for the electoral district of Saint—Henri—Westmount, introduced by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the Hon. André Ouellet.

The Speaker: It being 2.24 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

I would like to point out to the hon. members that we are going to take the regular statements by members, and then, we will move on to oral questions. We will take all the time we need, 45 minutes, and, in an hour from now, we will have completed question period. We will then proceed with the orders of the day and take a bit more time, if necessary, for our debate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

HON. LUCIEN BOUCHARD

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to greet Lucien Bouchard on his return. We are delighted to have him in our midst again, pleased to see that he has pulled through his terrible ordeal and is resuming his place in the House of Commons. The Leader of the Opposition knows only too well that nothing is certain in this life. And yet he maintains that the referendum should not be launched unless the sovereignist option is sure to win. This, he says, is in the interest of Quebecers.

It is indeed in the interest of the entire country that a referendum be held, and as soon as possible, not to see one side or the other win, but instead to learn the position of Quebecers and resolve the issue once and for all. That is democracy. Anything else is shameful manipulation. Quebecers deserve better than that after all.

For my part, I say yes to one clear question. I say yes to a strong Quebec, I say yes to a unified Canada.

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QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am still moved by the return of my leader and by his speech.

Yesterday, the Quebec Federation of Labour, which has some 450,000 members, adopted a manifesto and an action plan to mobilize workers in favour of Quebec's sovereignty. I had the honour of addressing the 1,600 shop stewards present at this special assembly.

The members of the Bloc Québécois would like to pay tribute to Bob White, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, who spoke in favour of the democratic right of Quebecers to self-determination. He stressed that a yes in the referendum should be respected by the rest of Canada.

We would like to congratulate the Quebec Federation of Labour for its commitment at this turning point in the history of the Quebec nation.

S. O. 31

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association has printed more than 10,000 neon yellow cards which make the important point that when taxes go up employment goes down.

The restaurant and food services industry employs more than 667,000 people in Canada. They know firsthand the devastating effect taxes can have on their businesses and jobs in Canada.

The last time the government made a tax grab with the GST the industry lost 46,000 jobs almost overnight. An Ernst & Young report concluded that two out of every three jobs lost were directly as a result of the new tax.

The restaurant and food services sector is a huge employer of students, recent immigrants and single mothers. It has been estimated that 30 per cent of those Canadians working today had their first experience in the workforce in food service. It is also an industry that depends on disposable income and is one of Canada's most labour intensive.

If taxes go up employment will go down. It is that simple. Taxes kill jobs.

* * *

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on budget day Canadians will be preparing themselves for another tax increase on gasoline prices.

The Liberal government will take the responsibility of justifying these high taxes to Canadians. However consumers have already had to deal with many increases in gas prices when oil companies hiked the prices at the pumps for no reason at all. These increases are invisible taxes on consumers by the multinational oil companies and have not been justified.

The Liberal government not only condones this price gouging but encourages it. In a recent report the Bureau of Competition Policy has said that oil companies can charge whatever they want for gasoline.

Canadians need an energy pricing review commission with the power to investigate gas price increases and when unjustified roll them back. I challenge the Liberal government in the upcoming budget to get out of bed with the oil companies and

give consumers a fair deal by immediately setting up an energy price review commission.

* * *

HEART MONTH

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind members of the House that February is Heart Month.

Heart disease and stroke are the number one killers in Canada of both men and women and together are responsible for the loss of 75,000 Canadian lives each year. In fact 40 per cent of all deaths in the country are due to cardiovascular disease.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada tells us that the risk factors for heart disease include high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, smoking and physical inactivity. The foundation strives to educate Canadians about these risk facts and plays an important role in the fight against heart disease.

During the month of February more than 100,000 volunteers will be canvassing in our communities to raise public awareness and funds for research and education.

Please join me in saluting the Heart and Stroke Foundation and its many volunteers for their excellent work. So, when they come knocking on your door, have a heart.

* * *

PORT OF HALIFAX

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to bring good news from the port of Halifax. In 1994 revenues of the port of Halifax were up 4.7 per cent.

(1430)

There is more good news. There was an increase of 23 per cent in container traffic in the fourth quarter of last year. Sixteen hundred vessels called at Halifax last year. That was a big increase. It included 39 cruise vessels bringing 38,000 tourists to Halifax, the home of this year's G-7 and was a 22 per cent rise over 1993.

The future is bright for the port of Halifax. Officials there predict a 15 per cent to 25 per cent increase in container business this year.

The port of Halifax is the key to economic recovery in this area. It provides 2,500 direct and 4,500 indirect jobs to Halifax.

I am sure that members of the House will join me in commending the port of Halifax on a very successful year.

S. O. 31

FISHERIES

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to offer my firm support to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in his efforts to conserve Greenland halibut and turbot.

The European Union has launched a formal objection to the quota decision of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. It was the European Union's use of this objection procedure in the late 1980s that led to the moratoria on flatfish and cod on the tail of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

Even as scientific findings showed evidence of stock decline, the Spanish ignored all warnings and actually increased their fishing efforts.

The NAFO decision is the result of a vote by the world's major fishing nations: Japan, Russia, Norway, Iceland, Cuba and Canada. Its findings are based on conservation, science and traditional shares.

It is irresponsible for the European Union to play by the rules only when the rules are in its own favour. We cannot allow further destruction of Canada's fisheries resources while communities such as those in my riding of St. John's West are suffering economic devastation in the name of conservation.

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[Translation]

KINGSTON PRISON FOR WOMEN

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the CBC's English network aired some deeply disturbing footage of the riot squad in action last April at the Kingston Prison for Women. The humiliation the six female inmates were subjected to at the hands of the male emergency response team raises some serious questions.

In his report yesterday, the correctional investigator denounced the use of excessive force against inmates. The same report completely contradicts the findings of the internal inquiry by correctional services, which condoned the acts of the emergency response team through its complacency, to the disgust of the Elizabeth Fry Society.

The Solicitor General must assure this House that the director at the prison for women who was in charge of the internal inquiry will be suspended immediately for having hidden the truth.

[English]

RAILWAYS

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a strike or a lockout is looming for the nation's railways. The negotiating parties have had 13 months to reach a collective agreement on their own and they have failed.

If such a strike or lockout were to occur, the country's transportation network would grind to a halt within days. It would devastate shippers of coal, potash and newsprint, paralyse the auto industry and, as usual, leave western grain farmers footing the bill for somebody else's irresponsibility.

The cost of such a strike to our economy is just too high and the government knows this. That is why for the 14th time in the last 29 years we will have no choice but to suspend the rules of the House in order to pass emergency back to work legislation. If and when this happens it will be the second time in two years. I hope we have not already forgotten the Vancouver port strike experience.

My private member's bill, Bill C-262, offers a permanent solution to this chronic problem. Let us pass Bill C-262 so that we do not find ourselves in the same position again this year.

* * *

BANKS

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning four national banking institutions raised their lending rates in reaction to the Bank of Canada's rate hike yesterday to a one year high of 8.38 per cent.

Just as last week when Moody's Investors Service put Canada's AAA domestic bond rating on a credit watch, now our own institutions have shown a complete lack of understanding of our deficit problem. It is extremely shocking and saddening when our national institutions do not have the patience and presence of mind to wait for the budget.

Maybe the finance minister will slash the budget drastically to control the deficit. I fail to understand why the bogeyman of inflation created by the previous government is being resurrected once again.

(1435)

With inflation presently running low, there is no need for higher interest rates. The increased rates will hamper job creation and hurt small businesses, as it will thousands of Canadians who have to renew their mortgages this year.

It is time for the Bank of Canada to initiate systems policies—

S. O. 31

TRUCKSAFETY

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during a one day blitz in Toronto, 73 per cent of trucks pulled over by police forces were deemed unfit for the road and immediately taken out of service.

This appalling level of truck safety poses a serious threat to the lives of Canadians. I ask the Minister of Transport to urge his provincial colleagues to ensure high levels of regulation enforcement and, if necessary, higher fines on trucking companies to prevent loss of life and injury.

This problem exemplifies the importance of maintaining strong enforced regulations for the protection of all Canadians.

* * *

INCOME TAX

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 10, 1994 I brought to the attention of the Minister of Finance the report that 20 Canadian millionaires had paid less than \$100 each in income tax in 1991.

I believe that the number has increased each year since. Each and every Canadian has to pay his or her fair share of taxes. How can we as members of Parliament tell our constituents that they must pay their income taxes when they see wealthy Canadians taking advantage of tax loopholes?

If we are to fight the deficit on all fronts, I hope the Minister of Finance will take the opportunity available to him to close tax loopholes for the rich. We have to let the people of Canada know that one does not receive special tax privileges because of personal wealth.

* * *

CITY OF MISSISSAUGA

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to proudly announce a benchmark achievement by the city of Mississauga, the ninth largest city in the country and the fastest growing at half a million in population.

Mississauga led the country in 1994 in issuing almost \$1 billion worth of building permits for 4,400 new residential units and 2.2 million square feet of industrial commercial floor space.

Corporate head offices continue to find Mississauga an ideal place to locate because of the attractive tax and hydro rates and the proximity to Pearson International Airport. They include Sunbeam Corporation, Siemens Electric and Mary Kay Cosmetics.

The value of these permits represents a 37 per cent total increase over the previous year and a 30 per cent increase for the industrial commercial sector.

The prosperity and phenomenal growth in Mississauga is yet one more signal that Mississaugans and Canadians are confident in the Prime Minister and the Liberal government.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Daniel Latouche, a professor of political science, set the record straight at a hearing of the Eastern Townships commission on the future of Quebec. He unequivocally stated that there are costs associated with remaining a province, especially in this era of globalization. They must also be discussed.

A no in the referendum would mean that Quebec would not gain distinct status, different from that of the other provinces. It would also mean that the rest of Canada would continue to ignore the distinct character of Quebecers, regardless of the arrangement proposed.

We must not forget that Pierre Elliot Trudeau promised renewed federalism in exchange for a no in the 1980 referendum. His government used the opportunity to quash the legitimate hopes of Quebecers. This is what the true cost of not opting for sovereignty is.

* * *

[English]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government appears to have a hearing problem. While Canadians coast to coast are saying "no new taxes", the government chooses to hear "keep on spending".

That would explain the Liberal revenue minister's statement that the government will not listen to the anti-tax protests. "Such protests", he says, "will not change the government's position on the budget".

For a month I have been circulating an anti-tax petition. Judging from the heavy response, the tax revolt is just beginning to make itself heard. It took only a month to gather anti-tax petitions with 20,000 signatures, which I will be tabling today.

Twenty thousand more Canadians from Victoria to Halifax are joining in a revolt against a government that has yet to realize that it has a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

(1440)

The battle over the budget is just beginning. In case the front benches have their hearing aids turned down, let me repeat the message loud and clear: no more taxes.

*Oral Questions***MINING**

Mr. Peter Thalheimer (Timmins—Chapleau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday of this week I had the occasion to be present for the opening of the 12th annual Mine Operators Conference, held in Timmins, Ontario in my riding.

Today I inform the House of the successful conclusion of the conference at Timmins. Mine managers, operators and technicians have presented papers, sold goods and services to each other and have increased the efficiency of mining today.

Over 350 delegates and 160 exhibits from all over Canada, the United States, Australia, Sweden, Finland and Pakistan were at the conference to trade ideas for the improvement of mining efficiency.

Mining is an important industry to Canadians. Last December the natural resource committee tabled a unanimous report calling on the government to take measures to help the mining industry and keep mining in Canada.

I would like to thank all participants at the conference and invite them back to northern Ontario to trade ideas and make Canada a better place for miners and the millions of Canadians and hundreds of communities that depend on mining.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the federal-provincial finance ministers' conference, we know that Ottawa will make drastic cuts in transfer payments to the provinces while deferring the impact of these cuts until next year. The federal government is trying to pass off as renewed federalism what will amount in fact to offloading its financial responsibilities.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Are we to understand that his government chose deliberately to defer the substantial cuts in transfer payments until after the Quebec referendum in order to hide from Quebecers, on the eve of the referendum, the cost of the federal government's financial withdrawal from education and health? In other words, that the federal government is holding back but will hit as soon as the referendum is over?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the Leader of the Opposition that, when we formed the government last year, we agreed with

the provinces that we would not make cuts without giving them prior notice. Under the previous government, the minister would get up on the day of the budget and announce the cuts to come into effect the following day. We said and, furthermore we promised in the red book that this brutal approach would not be repeated.

Therefore, if the Minister of Finance must cut transfers to the provinces, we will keep our promise and give the provinces fair notice before taking action.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister not admit that the block funding formula contemplated by his government, that is, consolidating all federal contributions to health and education programs into a single payment, is not a transfer of jurisdiction but a transfer of costs to the provinces?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance must assume his responsibilities, and we intend to make substantial cuts in all public administration sectors. It is not a matter of punishing anyone. On the contrary, we want to treat everyone equally. In any case, we do not know if there will be a referendum in 1995. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition can come to an agreement with Mr. Parizeau. After the date of the referendum is announced, you will know whether or not we acted with the referendum in mind.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister claim to offer flexible federalism when, in fact, while continuing to withdraw financial support for health and education programs, he tries to put the provinces in a straitjacket by forcing them to apply national standards to services that the federal government will stop funding?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we passed the national health legislation establishing medicare for all Canadians, it was approved by everybody. Everybody agreed.

(1445)

We do not have control over its administration. It is a provincial matter. When the programs were established we said we would help the provinces for a number of years but that once the programs were well established we might withdraw. That was the policy discussed at that time.

As far as Canada's national health system is concerned, it is very important that we keep it because Canada has the best system. In fact a few minutes ago the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to the very good health system that Canada has.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

OVERLAP AND DUPLICATION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, things are getting clearer and clearer. Last week, in this House, the Prime Minister presented his vision of a federal Canada, for the first time.

He said, in talking about the elimination of duplication, and I quote: "Duplication comes from Quebec deciding to have its own ministry of revenue collect personal income tax, unlike the other provinces. . . Duplication often comes from the other side".

My question is for the Prime Minister. Are we to understand from the revealing example he chose to give us that, in his vision of federalism, Quebec would be just like the other provinces and that, for example, he wants to take over from Quebec in collecting personal income tax?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. member that, on the contrary, we gave the province the responsibility of collecting the federal sales tax, the GST. Why could the provincial government not do the same for the federal government with regard to income tax?

As regards income tax, in the case of Ontario, only one line has been added to the tax return, and there is no provincial tax inspector for Ontario taxpayers. If Quebec wants to continue to have two systems, that is fine with me. I am making them an offer to help them save money. The minister responsible for harmonizing programs in Canada is successfully reaching agreements with the provinces in many areas. The only province that is not interested in discussing the elimination of duplication is the province of Quebec.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister not agree that his so called plan for decentralization to the provinces is not eliminating any duplication, since the federal government never intended withdrawing from areas of provincial jurisdiction, and, in each province, there will always be two departments of health and two departments of human resources all paid for by taxpayers' money?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are making offers to the provinces right now. I was speaking with the Premier of British Columbia a few minutes ago. We were discussing the possibility of harmonizing certain existing programs.

The other provinces are co-operating in trying to eliminate duplication. What is unfortunate is that only Quebec systematically wants to maintain duplication.

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance attacked Reform's plan to balance the budget in three years.

The minister made unfounded comments about its impacts in a futile attempt to divert public attention away from the shortcomings of his own budget targets. Under the Liberal fiscal plan, over \$100 billion will be added to the federal debt. Interest payments will amount to about one-third of the federal budget by the end of this Parliament.

Will the Prime Minister explain to seniors and to other Canadians what paying \$50 billion a year in interest will do to the social programs on which they depend?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased the leader of the third party mentioned old age pensioners. His document said he wanted to cut \$3 billion from that program. Reform has to realize that new people come on the payroll every year because other people reach the age of 65. The leader of the Reform Party cannot stop that.

(1450)

It costs almost \$1 billion more every year. If he wants to cut \$3 billion from what we have today, he will have to exclude the people who come on the payroll in the next two years. He will have to pay them another \$2 billion or cut another \$2 billion. The hon. member made a little mistake in one day of \$2 billion.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister avoids the hard question of how the government is going to live paying \$50 billion a year in interest. At the end of the day under the federal Liberal plan, the deficit will still be \$25 billion a year, the debt will be over \$600 billion and the government will have even less money than it has today to fund social programs.

Why does the government not screw up its courage and simply tell Canadians that the real threat to social programs is its inability to control the deficit and the debt?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the first time in a long time, and I have a lot of witnesses on this side of the House, that a government has presented a budget, as we did last February, and has met every target it set.

It is very easy to make promises you know you cannot keep. When I saw the budget prepared by the Reform Party this week, somebody said that it was back to the future. It has nothing to do with the reality of today. On the old age pension program alone, the Reform Party made a mistake of \$2 billion.

Oral Questions

We will meet our target. We will be at 3 per cent of GDP next year. It is the first time a government in Canada has met its target and we will meet it. Do not worry about it.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government has a red book that is symbolic of the red ink that flows from its policies.

Last fall the finance minister presented a grey book which is symbolic of these grey compromises between spending cuts and tax increases. Now it is abundantly clear that the government lacks what it takes to balance a budget, just like Mulroney and Wilson in 1984.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that the colour scheme for the budget that his minister will deliver next Monday will be pale yellow?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member only has to wait until Monday. I hope he will support all the cuts we will be proposing.

I would like to have his commitment right now that his party will support all the cuts we will make. It would be easy because they would turn around and say: "You should not do this or that". It is going to be a tough budget. I hope Reform Party members will be able to do in this House what they love to say outside it.

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[Translation]

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The government plans to cut 45,000 employees from the federal public service over three years and, to this end, intends to move unilaterally to introduce legislation eliminating job security for public servants.

Can the minister responsible for the public service explain why his government has chosen to push aside the proposals made by the largest union representing nearly 70 per cent of federal public servants, without having first exhausted every possible alternative through free collective bargaining?

(1455)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board has done excellent work on this issue. For weeks now, there have been discussions with every union affected. Sixteen unions out of 17 have found these proposals reasonable. And even in the union which opposes them, we are told opinion is greatly divided. People understand very well that what the President of the Treasury Board has offered as a solution is totally reasonable and logical,

given the difficult circumstances facing the government at this time.

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what guarantee can the minister give people that laying off thousands of public servants will not as in the past give rise to a substantial increase in contracting-out which does not necessarily allow for savings but which is highly conducive to government patronage?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives us no joy to be downsizing the public service. However, as a result of the programs and services that we must cut in order to meet our deficit reduction targets, there are people we will have to ask to leave.

We will give them every opportunity to find other jobs within the public service before they are put on layoff status. Certainly in terms of contracting out, I can assure the hon. member that it and temporary help and other means will be explored as a way of keeping our employees who want to stay before we allow for additional contracting out and other provisions.

We value the public service. We value the kind of service that is provided to Canadians by the people we employ.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if yesterday's announcement of public service layoffs was designed to quell fears and rumours, it was a dismal failure. Today the government has rubbed salt in the wounds of the public service by increasing the size of the cabinet just one day after announcing 45,000 job cuts in the public service.

The Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal put together a top level team of managers to tell him where to make cuts in the public service. Did he also put together a team of frontline workers to tell him where to make appropriate cuts in management?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that members of the third party speak from both sides of their mouths. On the one hand they ask us to reduce the expenditures of government; on the other hand they complain when we do exactly that by reducing the size of the public service.

What we have done with the public service is in fact the best treatment that could be given. We have introduced the possibility for them to have either early retirement or cash outs. We have made it much easier for civil servants who cannot be employed any more to leave the public service in a humane way.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, obviously we have a problem with a growing cabinet in a high

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level of top heavy government at a time when it is making cuts at the bottom and in the front lines.

For instance 20 per cent of all public servants, that is 48,000 people, make more than \$50,000 a year. There are 48,000 managers looking over the shoulders of the people who actually deliver the services.

Will the government tell us the proportion of management versus frontline cutbacks that we can see in this upcoming budget so that we can make sure that we are hammering the management, not just gutting the frontline services to Canadians?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the one addition to this side of the House is worth all of the ones and more on that side of the House.

With respect to the downsizing we are going to be carefully monitoring the situation at the different levels. If there is any disproportionate amount at any given level, then certainly we will take corrective action. We are focusing on programs and services, not on people. As a consequence, people at all levels will be part of the downsizing.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Privy Council published a document, which the *Financial Post* obtained, asking all businesses to use symbols of Canadian unity in their advertisements. The document recommends several guidelines that businesses can follow to defend the federal regime.

(1500)

Is it to be understood that this government, which is subsidizing the Council for Canadian Unity in order to obtain a list of those who are taking part in the regional commissions on sovereignty, is now enlisting businesses, with the help of the Privy Council, to lead a campaign of fear reminiscent of the one Quebecers were subjected to in 1980?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not see how the opposition can criticize letting social groups express themselves freely, when they have wasted \$5 million of their and our taxpayers' money on regional commissions whose only aim is to disseminate sovereignty propaganda.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was talking about businesses that have contracts with the government. The \$5 million is five to six times less than what the Spicer circus cost us two to three years ago.

What assurances can the minister give this House that the government is not compiling a register of businesses co-operating in this effort, for some future consideration?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I find the opposition's questions very out of place. We are simply helping social and business groups in Quebec who wish to get information on the costs of separation. We are not intimidating banks and financial institutions which are not on our side.

* * *

[English]

RAILWAYS

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources.

The country is ripe for a massive shut down in the railways, jeopardizing significant sectors of the economy. I notice he is turning to the hon. minister. We are not quite sure who is in charge there right now.

Will the minister assure us that the government will not present legislation to this House that will prevent the use of replacement workers during a labour strike and that there will be no prohibition of management employees, regardless of where they are located, replacing striking workers?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, concerning the problems at CN, CP and VIA, the conciliator's report was sent to the parties this morning. We earnestly hope they will sit down and discuss their differences. We truly hope that the parties themselves will find a solution. After all, they know the industry.

As for the issue of replacement workers, we are looking into the situation and will report as soon as possible.

[English]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased the initiation of the hon. minister to this House has been in answer to a question, but it was no answer, it was another approach.

Since the 1950s the federal government used back to work legislation as the last resort in transportation related labour disputes. Each time it had significant costs to the Canadian economy as a whole.

When will the ministry acknowledge that neither back to work legislation nor anti-scab legislation adequately protects the

economy from bitter transportation strikes and when will she seek effective impartial alternatives like binding final arbitration as a position?

(1505)

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will give specific answers to specific questions, and it is definitely premature to consider back to work legislation at this time.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Last week in the House, the Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec confirmed that his strategy for regional development would be based on providing assistance to small business. After cutting the budget of the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, the minister indicated that the new approach to helping small business would consist in providing consulting services.

Since the FORD—Q no longer has a budget for providing financial assistance to small business, will the Prime Minister admit that the Department of Industry, in other words, the minister responsible for regional economic development in Ontario, will now be responsible for the federal strategy for regional development in Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec is the Minister of Finance. Obviously, the Minister of Finance has a very good working relationship with the Minister of Industry.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister agree that, as far as regional development is concerned, the FORD—Q, which no longer has a budget, has become an empty shell and will only be used to promote the visibility of the federal government in the regions and to set national standards for regional development, while ignoring the priorities of the Quebec government in this respect?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout Quebec, people are very pleased to note the presence of federal agencies that are there to help them.

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[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PENSIONS

Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Oral Questions

The minister said he would let us know on or before budget day what he was doing about reforming the MPs' pension plan. The budget is next Monday. Can the minister tell the House if he has made any progress toward honouring his commitment to reform MPs' pensions?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mighty soon has arrived. The government has agreed to a package of reforms on MP pension plans and the bill will be introduced by the end of April as an amendment to the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act. Further information on the details will be available for members of the House later this afternoon.

The government will live up to its red book commitments. It will end double dipping for both MPs and members of the other house. It will put a minimum age in place on the basis of the Lapointe commission recommendation of age 55. It will provide for members to have a one-time only opting out—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would quit while I was ahead if I were you.

* * *

CORRECTIONS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last year I was asked by constituents to investigate whether male prison guards stripped female prisoners during the recent misguided and ill conceived raid in the prison for women. I was assured at that time that no male prison guard took part in the stripping of female prisoners and that only female officers were present.

My question is for the Solicitor General. Now that a videotape clearly shows that male officers were present, will this minister please tell me why his department officials lied to a member of Parliament?

(1510)

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already informed the House, we have two contradictory reports, one from the correctional service internal investigation and one from the correctional investigator.

Because they differ in facts and interpretation, we are convening a further independent inquiry. That will throw the light we are seeking on this difficult matter.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was assured at that time there were no male guards involved in that.

The minister stated that his government would bring honesty and integrity back to the dealings between government and Canadians.

Oral Questions

How can Canadians trust that the results of any investigation by this minister's department will not be more lies instead of what Canadians expect?

The Speaker: My colleagues, many times the issues that we are very much seized with in this House cause us to use words a little stronger than we might ordinarily use.

I wonder if I could prevail on the hon. member for Wild Rose to withdraw the word "lies" and perhaps use another one, to rephrase his question.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I will do my best but that is really tough because I do not know what else to call these things.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: As tough as it is going to be, would the member please withdraw the word "lies".

Mr. Thompson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the word "lies".

Will the minister assure this House that in the future when the officials from his department are asked questions by members of Parliament we can expect to get the facts and not a bunch of fiction?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will seek further information about who told what to the hon. member.

I hope that in future he will also refrain from using fiction in his questions.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Last Monday's federal-provincial meeting on greenhouse gases ended in a resounding failure. Despite the commitments it made at the Rio summit in 1992 and despite the electoral promises in the red book, Canada is stating openly that it cannot do its part in the worldwide effort to reduce greenhouse gases.

While Quebec has already achieved its objectives of stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions, how does the minister justify Canada's preparing to default on its international commitments because of a lack of political will on the part of the federal government and of the rest of Canada?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I said last week. Quebec has done exactly what the other provinces have done. Through its minister of the environment, Quebec

promised, at our meeting in Toronto, that it would have a Cabinet meeting in order to get an action plan to us by March.

I have not seen this action plan, because none has been forthcoming. I am waiting for Quebec to let us know its stabilization objectives. The government of Canada has its own areas of jurisdiction, and I can assure you that we will attain and exceed the objectives of our action plan.

Here is where we have problems. There are a number of jurisdictions we cannot encroach on. We cannot force a provincial government, like the government of Alberta, for example, to do more than it wants to.

(1515)

We are, however, doing our part and are patiently awaiting Quebec's action plan, which the government has not yet disclosed, and Cabinet not yet approved, according to the press release issued this week by Mr. Brassard.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Minister of the Environment that Quebec has done its homework. So you do yours.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to always address the Chair.

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Rather than give in to pressure from the oil industry lobby, would she perhaps agree to follow Quebec's example and ensure that the rest of Canada honours its international obligations in fighting the greenhouse effect?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may not have received the Parti Québécois' press release. I will read it to her: "Issued in Quebec City at 2.42 p.m. on February 20, Quebec's plan of action will soon be submitted to Cabinet for approval". It has not been approved yet, and we are impatiently waiting for it, because it is not only a question of stabilization, but much more.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, HIV has taken a recent jump in the Ottawa area mostly in women, mostly in new arrivals to Canada. Does the health minister think it would make any sense to check immigrants for HIV?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have mentioned in the House of Commons in the last number of days, all immigrants to Canada undergo the two checks of security and health in addition to the point system.

In the majority of cases where individuals are found to be HIV positive they are refused entry into Canada.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, HIV is an invisible disease; it cannot be seen. We screen for TB. We screen for hepatitis. We even screen for parasites. Why would we not screen for AIDS?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question of health checks has probably not been reviewed in the last 30-odd years.

At the end of last year the government said that one of the more important reviews immigration would be undertaking was an update and review of how health checks were done and for which diseases checks ought to be done automatically.

However, with all respect to the member of Parliament, I think we need to do the review in a sensible and sensitive way. I do not think anybody should rush irresponsibly into this subject matter.

It is being undertaken. It is being done seriously. It is being done the right way, rather than simply playing politics and exploiting diseases for particular gains.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of fisheries.

The European Union is formally objecting to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization's imposition of quotas for turbot fishing in the North Atlantic. It may encourage European Union member countries to ignore the NAFO limits.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McWhinney: Members can listen because it affects the west coast too.

Last year, when a similar problem arose on the Pacific coast, the minister took action against U.S. salmon fishing vessels and induced the United States to return to the negotiating table.

Will the minister consider perhaps exercising similar friendly persuasion on the Atlantic coast?

(1520)

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I think the member's expertise in the area of international law is acknowledged by everyone in the House.

The member is correct that last year we had some difficulties on both the west coast with respect to salmon and on the east coast with respect to Icelandic scallop. Canada took direct action and action by way of negotiations to try to resolve our differences.

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This year Canada's jurisdictional rights over Icelandic scallop is acknowledged by the United States, not challenged. This year we have completed the negotiation of a successful agreement governing the transit of Yukon salmon as a consequence of aggressive action last year. This year we are back at the table negotiating on Pacific salmon.

We much prefer to talk. We much prefer to negotiate. We will go to the nth degree to settle our differences by agreement. However we warn all those who are listening that we will not sit and talk while the last fish is being caught.

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[Translation]

FIREARMS REGISTRATION

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice stated on Monday that he was certain the legislation respecting firearms registration could be enforced in aboriginal territories just like everywhere else in Canada.

Since even Statistics Canada census takers claim they cannot carry out their work in aboriginal territory, how can the minister maintain that it will be so easy to register all firearms in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been engaged from the outset in discussions with the aboriginal leadership and indeed the discussions continue.

I have every confidence the system of registration of firearms that will be considered and passed by the House will apply and be effective across the country in enhancing community safety in all communities, including the aboriginal communities.

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LAND CLAIMS

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, based on leaked information surrounding the Nishga land claim in northwest B.C., which includes a settlement offer of \$125 million and 1,900 square kilometres of land, I understand the negotiations also include a federal offer for a treaty protected commercial fishery. This would provide a government guaranteed industry forever as opposed to a commercial industry.

Could the minister confirm that no commercial fishery will be constitutionally entrenched under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Nishga are probably the most patient first nation in Canada.

Points of Order

In 1903 they started their claim, could not get funding and did it with their own money. They won their case in 1973. They have been waiting 22 years for a settlement. Everything on the table is being negotiated. Nothing is being taken off the table because it might cause the hon. member some discomfort.

I think his time would be better spent if he got behind the Nishga who are in the constituency of one of the Reform critics and help them get through this very difficult time.

* * *

MONETARY POLICY

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

It is clear the government is prepared to break collective agreements with public servants and to block transfers to undermine social and health programs in the country. It is clear that we could get rid of a large number of civil servants and cut social programs and known governmental organizations but a 1 per cent to 2 per cent increase in the interest rate would wipe out any of those savings.

What is the Deputy Prime Minister's government prepared to do to finally address monetary policy and have the Bank of Canada really focus on keeping interest rates under control and below what they are now?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we intend to do that on Monday.

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PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Scooping is the practice of unlicensed private drivers stealing business from hundreds of taxi cab and limousine drivers who are legally licensed to operate from Pearson International Airport.

(1525)

Will the Solicitor General take measures to control this theft of an estimated \$6.5 million in business and put an end to these airport pirates?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this difficult situation involves a matter of legal interpretation. I understand that the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Transport and their officials are working to find a solution. I hope it will be developed before too long.

I would be happy to work with them in arriving at this solution because I know how much distress is being caused by the situation outlined by my hon. friend.

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[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague, the government House leader, to indicate which legislation will be considered in the next few days.

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer the question today because, as the House knows, our only business tomorrow will be to hear the President of the United States address a joint meeting of both Houses in this Chamber at three o'clock in the afternoon.

I might say also that the debate today will be on third reading of Bill C-37, the Young Offenders Act amendments. I have already said what we are going to be doing tomorrow.

On Friday the business will be second reading of Bill C-69, the electoral boundaries bill; followed if necessary by Bill C-37; followed by resumption of second reading debate of Bill C-69, the firearms bill.

On Monday morning of next week, the House will resume wherever it left off on Friday. However, as we already know, at 4.30 p.m. the Minister of Finance will make the annual budget presentation.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of next week the House will continue the budget debate.

On Thursday and Friday of next week the House will consider second reading of a bill respecting borrowing authority.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday of last week the House will recall that I rose on a question of privilege to request that the House allow for additional printing of Bill C-68, the firearms legislation, again called for debate on Friday of this week.

I was told at that time that on Tuesday of this week a decision would be reached concerning the additional printing of copies of Bill C-68 for members of Parliament who require the bill to properly inform their constituents.

I have been informed informally that a decision has been reached. I have been told informally that decision means members of Parliament can have a measly 10 extra copies of the bill.

I would like to know if the House or a member of the government could confirm that in fact that decision has been reached and, if indeed the decision means 10 copies, I would like the opportunity to protest the decision to the House.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy I wish to inform members of the House that the board has taken a decision to provide—I know it is a limited quantity—10 copies of the bill kit to all members of Parliament.

I must as well inform the House that bill kits are worth approximately \$20 each. Even that small quantity, as the House appreciates, results in a considerable expenditure that could range in the area of \$400 per member of Parliament. Therefore it is a very large expenditure for the House.

(1530)

Finally, it is my understanding that the Library of Parliament traditionally publishes notes. These notes are available to members of Parliament. They are referred to as bill summaries, and when the summaries are prepared they can be photocopied by members. That is not expensive and they can be presented to all and sundry.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, on that confirmation I wish to lodge a protest on behalf of many members of the House.

Nothing could be more important to the public than the opportunity to read the words that are contained in a bill before the House. I am not asking for the bill kits. I am asking for the opportunity to go to the printing office of the House of Commons to have a number of copies printed. This would not be the \$22 that the board has determined this would cost.

It is imperative that all Canadians have access to the bills of the House. As a member of Parliament, I would like to supply my constituents with a bill presented in this Chamber.

Mr. Boudria: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I should have mentioned that members can order extra copies through their operational budgets. I recognize this has limitations because it involves expenditures for each member of Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I think the matter is quite clear to all members of the House.

I thank the hon. government whip for responding and I thank the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake for bringing the issue back to the House following his original intervention some days ago.

At this point I would indicate to the House that if the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake wishes to choose another route to continue to raise this issue, I am sure as a well

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experienced parliamentarian he will find that mechanism and that route. For the time being the matter is deemed closed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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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, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the 62nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in respect of the order of reference dated November 29, 1994 regarding the furniture, supplies and equipment in each hon. member's constituency office and House of Commons office.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees.

This report is in part consequent on the admission of the new members of the House of Commons today.

If the House gives its consent I intend to move concurrence in the 63rd report later this day.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-307, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Copyright Act (profit from authorship respecting a crime).

(1535)

He said: Mr. Speaker, my bill would amend the Criminal Code and the Copyright Act to prohibit a criminal from profiting by selling, authorizing or authoring the story of a crime.

If a person is convicted of an indictable offence under the Criminal Code, any moneys he or she may have made or may make in the future from the creation of a work based on the

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crime would be deemed proceeds of crime subject to seizure by the crown.

Included would be moneys paid to the convicted person for the authorship of books, articles, screen plays, recordings, et cetera. Also covered would be moneys paid for the criminal's contribution to the creation of such a work, for example, getting paid to tell a story to a news program or the joint authorship of a book.

The bill further amends the Copyright Act to provide that the copyright in any work principally based on the crime where the work is created, prepared or published by or in collaboration with the convicted person becomes the property of the crown.

In countries that have signed the Berne convention on copyright, Canada could enforce its copyright ownership of the work, including preventing the sale and other distribution of the work and applying to seize any profits, the principle being a criminal should not receive a dime for committing a crime.

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

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[Translation]

ADM AGRI-INDUSTRIES LTD. OPERATIONS ACT

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-308, an act to provide the resumption of production activities at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill entitled "an act to provide the resumption of production activities at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd". The objective of this bill is to resolve the labour conflict between ADM, formerly Ogilvie Flour Mills Ltd., and the national union of employees of Ogilvie Flour Mills Ltd.

The company and the union are presently engaged in bargaining to renew the collective agreement which expired on January 31, 1992 and applies to some 150 employees of the milling industry. Realizing that no agreement could be reached with the help of the arbitrator appointed by the Minister of Human Resources Development, the parties faced a strike or lockout.

Union members began the strike on June 6, 1994. A federal mediator met with the parties on several occasions to help them but, unfortunately, little progress was made. During that time, the company continued operating using replacement workers to carry out the work of bargaining unit members.

In tabling this bill today, I would like to put an end to this dispute and conflict.

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

[English]

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I was going to introduce a private member's bill on behalf of the hon. member for Red Deer. I would like to proceed with it if I could.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I would ask then for unanimous consent for the member for Lethbridge to introduce the bill on behalf of the member for Red Deer.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Mr. Ray Speaker (for Mr. Thompson) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-309, an act to amend the Access to Information Act (disclosure of results of public opinion polls).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to introduce the bill on behalf of the member for Red Deer. This bill, an act to amend the Access to Information Act, which calls for the disclosure of results of public opinion polls, is a very important bill. It is important because it will demonstrate the commitment of Parliament to open government based on principles of accountability and transparency.

(1540)

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

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I cannot find the bill on the Notice Paper. Has notice of introduction of this bill been given?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I have received information from the Table that it might be Motion No. 28.

* * *

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I wish to put several motions today.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

BILL C-69

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move, with the unanimous consent of the House:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 68(7)(a), when the order of the day is called for consideration of the second reading of Bill C-69, an act to provide for the establishment of the Electoral Boundaries Commissions and the readjustment of the electoral boundaries, a representative of each party or group in the House may make a statement of not more than 20 minutes in relation thereto before the question is put, provided that when the question is put it shall be deemed to have been carried on division.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move, with the unanimous consent of the House:

[Translation]

That the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to travel to Washington, D.C., from March 15 to 17, 1995, for the purpose of meeting officials from international financial institutions and other appropriate individuals as part of the Committee's examination of the upcoming Halifax G-7 Summit Agenda and, in particular, reforms to international financial institutions, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[English]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a slight difficulty on the Order Paper for Private Members' Business since tomorrow is not a normal sitting day and there will be no private members' hour.

The hon. member for St. Albert has graciously agreed to allow his item, No. 2 on today's Order Paper, to be dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence. Therefore, the private members' hour will proceed as usual today and on Friday, No. 3 on today's Order Paper, in the name of the hon. member for Skeena, would be the item for discussion in private members' hour.

I would like to thank the hon. member for St. Albert for agreeing to do this. It is very kind of him. I think there would be consent in the House to allow that item to be dropped to the bottom in accordance with his wishes and to preserve the order

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of the other private members' hours for the next couple of weeks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

(1545)

[Translation]

PETITIONS

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a group of fellow citizens, I want to table a petition regarding euthanasia. The petitioners would like Parliament to ask Canadian doctors to continue saving lives instead of ending them.

They would also like Parliament to implement an act prohibiting assisted suicide in Canada. In addition, they ask that this legislation not be amended to make active or passive euthanasia legal.

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions. The first is on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources, a petition from Edmonton calling upon Parliament to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from my own riding I have a petition in which the petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the provisions in the Criminal Code prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that no change be made in the law.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another petition from my riding requests that Parliament not amend the human rights code dealing with sexual orientation.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another petition concerns changing the Criminal Code to prohibit assisted suicides. The petitioners are opposed to that.

SEX OFFENDERS

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition making the safety of our children a priority. The

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petitioners request that changes be made to the charter of rights to enable residents to be notified when repeat sex offenders are released into the community.

JUSTICE

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition with over 1,000 signatures calling on the government to introduce legislation that will ensure that individuals cannot use the intoxication defence to avoid prosecution for the commission of a crime.

My constituents are sending the message loud and clear. It is time for a change in the law. I wholly agree with my constituents.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by residents of Ottawa, Nepean, Gloucester and Bristol, Quebec reminding the House that 38 per cent of the national highway system has fallen below accepted standards. Mexico and the United States are upgrading their national highway systems. The national highway policy study identified job creation, economic development, national unity, saving lives, avoiding injuries, lower congestion, lower costs and better international competitiveness as benefits of the national highway program.

They call upon Parliament to urge the government to support all measures that will make the national highway system upgrading possible.

[*Translation*]

INTOXICATION AS A DEFENCE IN RAPE CASES

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour of tabling in the House two petitions asking the government to look into intoxication as a defence in rape cases.

[*English*]

The petitioners representing the areas of Pickering, Ajax and Whitby call upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure the excuse of extreme intoxication is never again used.

I support this petition.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. The first is from the Toronto area and calls on Parliament to amend the Criminal Code of Canada and the Young Offenders Act to provide for heavier penalties for those convicted of violent crime, specifically young offenders.

I am glad to note that our government is doing something about that.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition prays and requests that Parliament not

amend the Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the Human Rights Act to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

This is signed by quite a number of people from in and around my riding in Scarborough.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is also from in and around my riding in Scarborough, praying that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

It goes without saying I agree with all three petitions.

(1550)

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and honour to rise in the House to present a petition duly certified by the Clerk of Petitions on behalf of 171 constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, specifically North and South Pender Islands.

The petitioners humbly pray and request that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes, and implement a taxpayer protection act to limit federal spending.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I present two petitions on behalf of my constituents from New Westminster—Burnaby and other residents of the greater Vancouver area.

In the first petition, 80 want it to be known that physicians in Canada should be kept working to save lives, not end them. They pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously, and that Parliament make no changes in the law that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the signators call upon Parliament to immediately add sexual orientation to the list of grounds protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act, and further amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that the legislation protects our relationships and our families.

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GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting today two petitions signed by 193 of the constituents of Prince George—Peace River.

They feel that no amount of gun control has ever succeeded in preventing criminals from acquiring guns for illegal means. Therefore, they ask Parliament to support laws that punish criminals using firearms and to support, recognize and protect the rights of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms and abolish any existing gun control laws that have proven to be ineffective.

I fully endorse these petitions.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a few petitions to present today. The first one is from Helene Windship of North Vancouver and 115 others requesting that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes and implement a taxpayer protection act.

The second petition is signed by Rene Kosak of North Vancouver and 25 others asking that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes and limit federal spending with a taxpayer protection act.

The third petition is signed by D. A. Reece of North Vancouver and 30 others requesting that the government reduce spending instead of increasing taxes.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition is signed by Sheila Thompson of North Vancouver and 25 others asking that Parliament amend the Human Rights Act to protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The fifth petition is signed by Margaret Dale of North Vancouver and 60 others requesting that Parliament not pass Bill C-41 with section 718.2 as presently written and in any event not to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation, as the behaviour people engage in does not warrant special considerations in Canadian law.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition has 198 signatures, starting with Ronald Wells of Burnaby, and most of the others also live in Burnaby, asking that the government not increase taxes but reduce government spending and implement a taxpayer protection act to limit federal spending.

Furthermore, the Deputy Prime Minister promised to resign if the GST had not been abolished within one year and she has not yet done so.

[Translation]

VOICE MAIL

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling several petitions signed by people from four municipalities in my riding. The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ask the government to abandon its plan to introduce voice mail systems for seniors, given that seniors are naturally more at a loss when faced with voice mail technology.

These people are from Saint-Mathieu, Saint-Cyprien, Trois-Pistoles and Saint-Jean-de-Dieu. I extend my sympathy to the citizens of Saint-Jean-de-Dieu, who lost their mayor, Mrs. Rioux, this week, and to the Rioux family.

[English]

JUSTICE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first is part of my initiative on day 13 to present petition 13 which is the desire of constituents to halt the early release from prison of Robert Paul Thompson. April 11, 1995 is the date set for the parole hearing.

The petitioners I represent are concerned about making our streets safer for our citizens. They are opposed to the current practice of early release of violent offenders prior to serving the full extent of their sentences.

The petitioners pray that our streets will be made safer for law abiding citizens and the families of the victims of convicted murderers.

(1555)

TAXATION

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is signed by 106 people living in Alberta. These people are against the taxation of dental plan benefits.

These petitioners believe that such a taxation will prove to be a discouragement to those seeking preventative dental treatment. They pray that Parliament not betray their trust by taxing health.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table two petitions in this House today, both of which I support.

The first petition calls upon Parliament to oppose any amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which provide for the inclusion of the phrase sexual orientation.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks that Parliament reduce government

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spending instead of increasing taxes and implement a taxpayer protection act to limit federal spending.

TAXATION

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions in accordance with Standing Order 36.

The first is from petitioners in the Lesser Slave Lake—Westlock area in my riding. They request simply that the hon. finance minister not increase our net taxes in this year's budget.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners request that Parliament support laws that will severely punish all criminals who use weapons in the commission of a crime, support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions which recognize and protect the rights of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms, support legislation that will repeal and modify existing gun control laws which have not improved public safety or have proven not to be cost effective or have proven to be overly complex as to be ineffective and/or unenforceable.

I concur with the petitioners.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today I have three petitions all dealing with the same subject matter regarding gun legislation.

My constituents from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt call on Parliament to oppose further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and to provide strict guidelines for the mandatory sentence for use or possession of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime. There are 309 signatures on these three petitions which adds to a total of 1,839 of my constituents who have signed this petition to date.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present three petitions to the House today. Pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure to present to the House a petition signed by the constituents of Lincoln which reads: "The courts of Canada have deemed that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to all people in Canada regardless of status. We request that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms apply to Canadian citizens and people of landed immigrant status only".

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am tabling a second petition requesting that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the

Charter of Rights and Freedoms which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relations.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.): Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 which asks that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide are enforced vigorously and to make no changes in the law that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

TAXATION

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do thank you for the exercise that I was able to get during this period. It was quite invigorating to be on my feet this often.

During the past month or so it has been my pleasure to distribute this petition which has been signed by over 20,000 people from Victoria to Halifax; 9,000 of these people are from my own constituency of Fraser Valley East.

The petitioners call upon the government to take notice that they are already overburdened with taxation due to high government spending. Whereas the government is considering tax increases in the next federal budget, the petitioners pray and request that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes and implement a taxpayer protection act.

Obviously these petitions are easy to get people to sign and continue to flood into my office. It is a pleasure to present them on behalf of Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The good news for the hon. member for Fraser Valley East is that he has to sign the back of each and every one of those.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

(1600)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec—Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I placed Question No. 93 on the Order Paper on October 19. It should not be so difficult to come up with a response since the question was tabled on October 19, over four months ago. Normally, as you know, such questions must be answered within 45 days. Despite what the hon. member said, I know full well that this is not a complicated question. The data requested is well documented.

Knowing the minister responsible for this department, I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, that the delay in answering this

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question is part of the minister's strategy of silence. They are interfering with access to information and making it increasingly difficult. That was my experience with this minister and I am convinced—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I do not think this is a point of order as such.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the hon. member—I think it was on Monday and also last Friday—the government considered his representations. We are in the process of drafting a response to this question. I am certain that there are people now working on the response.

Mr. Marchand: I am not so sure about that.

Mr. Milliken: Yes, I am sure, because I made inquiries regarding this question on Monday before the hon. member raised his point of order, and I am certain that we will soon have a response for the hon. member, which I will table here in this House.

[*English*]

Once again, I thank the hon. member for raising this issue ad nauseam. I am delighted he is able to pursue it in this way. I look forward to having the response soon, as I indicated the other day.

I request that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the notice of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall the notice of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

The House resumed from February 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-37, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act and the Criminal Code, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-37, which concerns young offenders, because this is a very important and very revealing bill. If we look at all the aspects of this bill, basically, it contains all the elements of a debate on social values.

As you know, Quebec is involved in a process that is leading up to sovereignty, and often people wonder why we in Quebec are doing this. People wonder what kind of society we want in Quebec. Well, this is a good example of the kind of legislation Quebec wants to avoid, the kind of legislation that does not reflect tendencies in Quebec at all. As long as Quebec remains in Canada, however, we will never be able to introduce legislation that, in my opinion, would be fairer and more equitable than Bill C-37.

When I say this could develop into a debate on social values, I mean that, when we talk about young offenders, we talk about young people, we talk about young people in our society and we also talk about violence. These are two subjects that go to the very heart of a society and reflect what is wrong with society. When young people commit violent crimes or commit suicide or are extreme in the way they act, it is because there is something very wrong with society.

(1605)

It is symptomatic and also reflects all the problems besetting society. We cannot consider the issue of young offenders in isolation. We cannot isolate young people's problems as we would do in the case of transportation or more technical problems. We are talking strictly about the human, fundamental values in society. We cannot isolate this from the fact that we have poverty and unemployment, for instance, some of the factors by which society is defined. We cannot consider the problem in isolation. We cannot find the cause because there is no single cause.

An issue like that of young offenders must be approached with an open mind. We must consider what society is to us as well as our attitude to society and our attitude to justice within that society. We cannot take a short term view of this issue.

If we are to deal with the question of young offenders, we must have a comprehensive vision of society, a long term vision. Young offenders are a very serious problem that goes to the very heart of our society.

Once Quebec is sovereign, it will be a small and, I think, well integrated society. I think it will be able to come up with a real solution. In fact, the current legislation in Quebec that deals with young offenders is more advanced than what is being proposed by the federal government. I have the impression that a sovereign Quebec will be able to pursue this approach, to deal with the problem as we will deal with other problems, and that it will have a more enlightened sense of justice than what we see in Bill C-37.

I would say that, as long as Quebec is a part of Canada, we will never find a constructive way to deal with the problem of young

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offenders, because Bill C-37 is an attempt to respond to the demands of people from the West, people who have a different perspective and take a different approach to the problem.

Bill C-37 is an attempt to respond to their concerns and their way of dealing with the problem. And consequently, this creates a problem for Quebec. It prevents us from going ahead with our own strategy.

As long as Quebec stays in Canada, there will be a jurisdictional tug of war, on this issue as on many others, because of the difference in vision. In this case, there is a very obvious difference between Western Canada and Quebec. Our two approaches are diametrically opposed.

This bill, which is an attempt to strike a balance, to respond to the demands of the West, will prevent the Quebec system from going ahead. It will be a waste of time and effort, it will not solve the problem, as I have been trying to explain, and will provide no remedy at all for the problem of young offenders. It is an exercise in futility and a waste of money, time and effort. I do not see anything constructive in Bill C-37.

(1610)

In fact, the bill itself focuses particularly on young people 16 and 17 years of age, who are charged with serious crimes involving violence, such as murder. It would mean that these young people could be brought before adult courts. They can be sent to youth courts, but with this bill, they could be tried in adult courts.

If young people are tried in youth courts, the sentences will be harsher. The maximum sentence for murder will increase from five to ten years. The qualifying periods for parole will increase, parole will be harder to obtain, and the records of young offenders will be retained longer.

In short, this bill imposes stiffer sentences on young persons, particularly those who are 16 and 17 years of age. This is the spirit of this bill: impose harsher sentences on young offenders. But violence among young people is the work of a few. They do not represent a particular trend in society. They represent a very small proportion of young people—a few dozen.

This bill deals with a few exceptional cases, which do not represent any sort of trend in society. There is no distressing increase in violence by 16 and 17 year olds. The figures over some 15 years in this area reveal no sort of increase.

Until 1992, there was a five per cent increase in crimes involving young persons, but since then, the figure has been more like 2 per cent. This is the general crime rate among young people. This increase compared with the increase in population reveals no startling change.

All of the experts agree that the rate of serious crimes among young people, such as murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, has remained stable or has decreased in the past decade.

This is what the statistics tell us about the number of violent crimes among young people.

We cannot even say that violent crime has increased among young people, but we can say that there have been a few cases, the exception. For example, the two boys in England who killed a child of five or six, or other cases we can cite as examples of sensationalism, which were given considerable attention on television and in the newspapers.

Bill C-37 is in response to this sort of sensationalism or this perception. We are not dealing with a critical problem for society. There is no crisis; violence is not really on the rise among young people. This bill is trying to deal with very exceptional cases.

(1615)

That is the nature of the problem with this bill. I would like now to address the consequences for young persons of calling for harsher sentences at this time. The consequences are, to be sure, the same as for older criminals, that is people in adult penitentiaries. The consequences are the same and every study by every expert confirms unequivocally that the sentence offenders receive has no influence whatsoever on the crime rate.

Imposing sentences of 10, 15 or 20 years will not reduce crime. Studies show this clearly. Moreover, in looking at the situation, it seems that the more sentences are increased, the greater the number of offenders. Go visit Canadian penitentiaries. I have had the opportunity to visit every penitentiary in Canada, from Dorchester to the B.C. maximum security prison, including the Saskatchewan maximum security institution. I worked for the Canadian Penitentiary Service and visited all Canadian penitentiaries and, looking at what goes on inside them. Considering the studies and statistics, one realizes that, once a person is sent to a Canadian federal penitentiary, there is a four in five chance that he will return a second time and the odds increase.

Canadian penitentiaries are training grounds for criminals, quite simply, and this is very easy to understand. If you go to Dorchester or any other prison, you will see how the law of violence rules these places. When they get out, people are already trained for violence, especially in Canadian penitentiaries as they were in my day, where there was no training of any kind, no rehabilitation or, if there was any, they were silly things such as programs to make mail bags.

Yes, there were a few little programs here and there, for training, education, but generally speaking there was no training, no rehabilitation program whatsoever. Prisoners were left to their own devices and when released from prison, the situation was clearly disastrous. There are organizations which try to help prisoners after their release, such as the Elizabeth Fry Society for women, and there is also an organization which tries to help released prisoners, I forget the name, but there is very, very little help.

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In those days, the system was such that you could predict the number of criminals society would produce. In the penitentiary system, prison construction plans were drawn up for five or ten years down the road. In fact, when I was there, my job was to try to find cities where prisons could be built. The penitentiary system was a real industry within the government.

(1620)

We therefore could predict when we could fill them. Obviously, that could serve some political purpose. In fact, some politicians thought that it was desirable to have a penitentiary in their riding because it created jobs.

We can agree that imposing longer and heavier prison sentences is not the solution. Nobody thinks that this is the way to help people who have committed serious crimes, especially young offenders. There is hope in setting up rehabilitation and training programs for young people. At least they can be rehabilitated. It is not by imposing heavier sentences that we can hope to rehabilitate offenders.

From the way this bill is taking shape, it seems that we will be able to send 16 and 17 year olds to penitentiaries. The 27-year olds leaving jail after 10-year prison terms will be hardened criminals. This resolves nothing.

In fact, Bill C-37 has sprung from a thirst for revenge. It was also created to please politicians from the right who think that heavier sentences will thin out the criminal element. It resolves nothing. It does not improve the lot of young people.

The bill itself is incoherent. It will create administrative problems and delays for Quebec, which has already taken the rehabilitation route. Quebec is already well on its way to helping young offenders, and Bill C-37 will slow us down in this endeavour.

It seems to me that anyone with a heart will realize that young people do not need to be put away, they need to be closely supervised. In my opinion, this is the best solution. Quebec already is on the right track, and a sovereign Quebec will be able to continue in that direction, not only when it comes to assistance for young offenders, but also when it comes to the issues of justice and violence. As a country, we will be able to propose real solutions, rather than measures like Bill C-37, which in no way resolve a very, very serious problem.

[English]

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech the member talked about a more fair and equitable policy. More fair to whom, the offenders or the victims; fairer to law-abiders or lawbreakers?

He introduced a notion of values that should be upheld. He also indicated that there was no single cause of crime. He tried to

turn that around to say that we need some long term global view rooted in the basic problems of society. He advocated a more insular cohesive Quebec with reduced interaction with the larger social world and that somehow that would ameliorate the young offender problem. I assert to the member that is just another version of separatist fantasy stories.

(1625)

Then he talked about Bill C-37, that perhaps it was only requested because of problems arising in the west. I advise the member that the human heart is the same and the propensity for young offenders to offend is the same across the country.

It seems every comment from the Bloc is turned into a territorial turf question about who is in control and has a varied sociological view. This does nothing to constructively build a better Canadian society. The member denies the reality of youth crime in his own province. He advocates a separatist ideology of expansive social order and an inappropriate response to youth crime.

Canadians across the country have subsidized rehabilitation efforts for offenders in Quebec. We do that with transfer payments yet he wants to abandon it. He claims that a separate country of Quebec could do a lot better. I say he is mistaken about his dreams. I advise him that the polls tell us that most Quebecers also say he is just dreaming.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, thank God I am dreaming. Thank God that I can hope to improve or to speak in ways that can improve society.

The system of justice is for whom? Certain people in the House speak only about the victims. As far as I am concerned from what I have read, the system of justice was conceived to protect and improve society. People who think that hanging the person who killed so—and-so will make the family of the victim better off are not thinking clearly or do not have a grasp of the problem.

We need laws that try to improve society as a whole. It is not by imposing more severe punishment on young offenders that we will improve the lot of society.

In response again to the hon. member, in Quebec we have the capacity to bring in a better system. We already have because in Quebec we understand. We have a sense of humanity in respect of young offenders that allows us to think in terms of rehabilitating them rather than thinking exclusively of putting them into prison and increasing the punishment, which has proven to be totally useless not only for the young but for the older criminals.

We are already on a progressive path in respect of that problem. Bill C-37 is retrograde. It is coercive. It is repressive. It is like going back to the Middle Ages. That is why I say that in Quebec, and especially in a sovereign Quebec, we will probably,

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hopefully, be able to do things a bit better. I hope people elsewhere will also be able to do better.

It is not just a question of territorial control. Certainly it is a question of justice. It is a question of cultural sovereignty. It is a way of interpreting justice. Our way in Quebec of interpreting how young offenders should be judged is more equitable or more profitable in the long term for society than forcing young offenders to be submitted to longer terms of imprisonment, which are a total waste of human life.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my friend.

He made the comment that people who are in favour of stronger punishment for criminals and capital punishment are not clear thinking or are not thinking properly.

Does he realize that the majority of Canadians, including the majority of people in his own province, agree that we should have stronger sentences for criminals, that we should be tougher on criminals and tougher on crime, and that we should reinstate the death penalty in Canada?

(1630)

Is the hon. member going to then stand up and say that the majority of people in his province cannot think properly? That is what he is implying with his statements.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, I am not implying that by any means. I do not know which statistics the hon. member has looked at but in Quebec people are not crying out for more severe punishment. I do not believe that we are in agreement for the death penalty. We have progressed and realized that the right path is not the death penalty or severe penalties against criminals.

I think we have understood that. There are no statistics in Quebec indicating that that is what the majority of people in Quebec would want. It may be in the west, but certainly not in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to disagree almost completely with the comments made by the member of the Bloc Québécois.

Bill C-37 contains provisions that emphasize rehabilitation. How can you rehabilitate a young offender who is still on the street with his group of friends and partners in crime? I still remember that, as a kid, it was not the school teacher's strap I was afraid of, it was the spanking waiting for me at home after my brothers told my father.

I remember when one of my brothers stole a 10-cent item from the store. When my father found out, he forced my brother to go back to the store to apologize and return the stolen item to

the victim. This was followed by corporal punishment. I think it turned out well. My brother never had a problem with the law after that.

Throughout this debate, we have shown great concern for the criminals but very little concern for the victims. I know people who commit a crime in the fall so that they can spend the winter in prison because they eat better there than many street people.

I spoke about this with several police officers who must arrest these young offenders. Almost all of them say the same thing: Young criminals are laughing at us. We charge them with a crime and they say, "I do not care. It does not matter what you do because I will be back on the street tomorrow morning". They know they can go before a judge, who will slap them on the wrist and say, "Do not do that any more, little boy". That is why there are so many repeat offenders.

Again, I think our first concern should be to protect society. As they say, if you cannot do the time, do not do the crime. Young people must realize this.

The purpose of sentencing is not to punish young people but to act as a deterrent. If sentences are tough enough, they will have a deterrent effect and reduce crime.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, the evidence is there. Studies have shown there is no deterrent effect. Increasing the sentence does not reduce the crime rate. Studies have confirmed this.

I agree that, when you are a kid and your father gives you the odd spanking, it might help. But when we are talking about putting people in prison, especially young people, in institutions that reinforce criminal behaviour, that is different. I agree we have to strike a balance, and I agree that some people will say that we are more concerned about the criminal than the victim.

Of course we have to be concerned about the victim, but it seems to me we should take a more progressive approach to the way we treat young offenders. And the way we do this reflects the values of our society. When we talk about young offenders, we are talking about a small number of people, but we need all kind of resources to help deal with what causes these young people to commit violent crimes.

The trouble is this bill imposes more severe sentences for young people who have committed a murder but, basically, the problem is the same as in the case of young people who commit suicide. There is something deeply wrong with society, and young people are saying this by their extreme actions.

(1635)

So it is not by punishing young people who are victims of the system that we will solve the problem. We have to change the way society works. We have to make sure their father and mother have jobs and are not violent. As you know, a young person may be violent because his father and his mother are violent. That is why I say that in Quebec we will probably have

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less trouble dealing with the real causes of these problems because we will consider all the other factors and not just—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I am sorry, but the period for questions and comments has expired.

[*English*]

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Frontenac—Dairy farmers; the hon. member for Timiskaming—French River—Justice.

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to comment on Bill C-37, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act.

This bill was the subject of justice committee hearings from June 23 to December 8, 1994. During these hearings, victims groups, groups of offenders, witnesses from children's aid societies, as well as representatives from judges' groups, bar associations and school boards all made recommendations to the committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of these individuals and groups for taking the time and effort to present their positions to the committee. I would also like to congratulate the members of the committee for their work on the bill during these hearings.

This bill is not perfect. No bill ever is. I believe that to understand the purpose of this bill one must first understand the purpose of the Young Offenders Act generally.

The Criminal Code of Canada sets out Parliament's goals and initiatives in the area of criminal sentencing for adult offenders. Conversely, we have enacted a separate statute, the Young Offenders Act, which legislates the sentencing process for young offenders. This is in recognition of the fact that young offenders often commit crimes for vastly different reasons than the motives behind adult crime.

The goals of punishment, deterrence and rehabilitation are often achieved through different methods with young offenders than with adult criminals. The primary difference often recognized by experts is that many young offenders have a much better chance of being rehabilitated and becoming productive members of society than adult offenders. Tied in with this is the idea that for many young offenders the commission of a crime is an isolated incident in their lives, whereas for adult offenders, the commission of a crime more often signifies a larger pattern of lifestyle.

Unfortunately, events over the past few years in Canada have shown that not all young offenders fit the stereotypical mould of a young person who in committing a crime made an isolated mistake. Perhaps the most striking example of this was the tragic death of Nicholas Battersby last spring here in Ottawa.

Mr. Battersby was shot in a drive-by shooting in broad daylight just blocks away from this House. Four young offenders were accused of this crime. I believe one of these youths has already pleaded guilty to this offence.

We also hear of swarmings in Toronto. This is the term for a phenomenon where a group of youths harass and beat a lone individual, sometimes simply for the clothes he or she is wearing.

These and other tragic stories show Canadians one thing: Some young offenders, long before they reach the age of 18, have become hardened criminals and the Young Offenders Act is simply inadequate to rehabilitate them or to protect Canadians from them.

We hear stories of youth who state that they commit crimes without any worry of being punished for their acts. We hear young Canadians openly saying that they would continue to commit crimes because the punishment available under the Young Offenders Act until the age of 18 simply does not scare them.

It is with this backdrop that the Minister of Justice has brought forth this legislation, Bill C-37. I would like to speak now on some specific measures in the bill.

(1640)

The first measures contained in the bill are, in my opinion, the most important and fundamental amendments to the Young Offenders Act. The amendments proposed to paragraph 3(1) of the present act send a clear message to the judiciary who are responsible for enforcing the act. The protection of society is a primary objective of the Young Offenders Act. This preamble is most important.

Much of the time, the varying goals of the criminal law are in conflict. Some measures while they contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders may place the public safety at greater risk. I am here today to say that Parliament, the judiciary and other stakeholders in this debate must never forget that the safety of the public can never be compromised.

While some measures may be seen as contributing to the rehabilitation process, these benefits must be contrasted with any threat they present to the public safety. This is the fundamental struggle of any criminal justice system. Nowhere is the dilemma more prevalent than it is with the young offenders system.

While studies and common sense dictate that as a group young offenders are much more amenable to rehabilitation than adult offenders, we have learned the hard way that young offenders can also be serious threats to the public safety. The Young Offenders Act therefore must recognize the dual and conflicting role that it must play. The amendments proposed to paragraph 3(1)(a) send a strong message to the judiciary that Parliament

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expects the judiciary to consider public safety and rehabilitation when considering the Young Offenders Act.

The other amendment which this bill proposes to paragraph 3(1) is to affirm that young persons must accept the responsibility for their actions and for their contraventions. Again, the whole purpose of the Young Offenders Act is to recognize that the young persons accept this responsibility in different ways than do adults. However, they still must accept responsibility for their actions and also the responsibility of rehabilitating themselves.

On the theme of protection of public safety, I would like to turn to the amendments proposed to section 16 of the Young Offenders Act. These amendments would provide that 16 and 17-year old offenders who commit murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter would be tried as adults unless the youth court orders that the youth be tried as a young offender. Under the present Young Offenders Act an offender can be tried in adult court, but only if the crown successfully petitions the youth court for such a transfer.

Presently, a young offender who is charged with any crime will automatically be tried in youth court unless the crown can convince a judge that circumstances merit otherwise. Under this bill a 16 or 17-year old charged with murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter will be automatically tried in an adult court unless a judge, on application, can be convinced otherwise.

I know I am repeating myself but it bears repeating. This is a very important step. Effectively, a reverse onus will lie with a young offender charged with these crimes to show a judge why he or she should not be tried in adult court.

The effect of these amendments will be to increase public safety while also recognizing that in certain cases an offender charged with these offences may be best dealt with under the Young Offenders Act.

This amendment is also consistent with the principle that young persons must accept responsibility for their actions. This amendment is of fundamental importance.

The present maximum sentence available under the act of five years for a 16 or 17-year old who commits murder is inadequate. As many of us know, some young people who have committed murder openly mock this sentence.

This amendment sends a message to all Canadians and to young offenders. That message is that while there may be valid reasons for giving a young offender a second chance, a young offender accused of these serious crimes must convince the court of these reasons.

These amendments therefore address the competing interests between public safety and rehabilitation, particularly when serious crimes such as murder are at issue.

In particular, I would like to bring the attention of the House to section 16(1.1)(b) which under clause 8(1) of Bill C-37 states that when considering whether a young offender should be tried as an adult or in youth court, the protection of the public will be paramount. If the judge is unable to reconcile this objective of public protection with other objectives, then the youth will be tried as an adult. This in my opinion is an ideal method of dealing with this dilemma of reconciling the protection of the public and other objectives of the criminal justice system.

(1645)

Youth crime, like any other crime, demands a reasoned response to address all the goals of a criminal justice system such as general deterrence, specific deterrence, rehabilitation and public safety. However, when the other objectives conflict with the goal of public safety, public safety must take priority over other considerations.

I therefore support the amendment whereby 16 and 17-year old offenders must show the court why they should be tried in a youth court. In fact, it is unfortunate in my view that this amendment applies only to 16 and 17-year olds. It could easily have been expanded to all young offenders with consideration of the age of the offender becoming a key consideration which a judge would consider in determining whether or not an offender should be tried in youth court. Perhaps this could be something that might be addressed later in phase two of the study on the Young Offenders Act.

In conjunction with the amendments in Bill C-37 dealing with the transfer of 16 and 17-year olds accused of murder or attempted murder, the bill also raises the maximum penalty under the Young Offenders Act for first degree murder to 10 years from five years. In addition, the maximum penalty for anyone convicted of second degree murder will be raised from five to seven years. Again, these provisions in my opinion address the concern that we live in a society where a sentence of five years is not adequate in all cases to deter crime and to protect society, or to rehabilitate the young offender.

Bill C-37 will also provide for victims of youth crime to make impact statements at the sentencing of a young offender. Too often with our criminal justice system, victims complain that they are victimized twice, once by the crime and again during the court proceedings in relation to the crime. We hear stories of victims who are not even informed of when the offender will be sentenced. Victims complain that they have no input in the criminal proceedings.

While it is obvious that the judge in any case must be the final arbiter of a case, in order to adequately dispose of a case the judge must have the representations of all the affected parties before him or her. This includes representations from victims of crime detailing the impact the crime has had on their lives. Only with this input will judges truly be able to pass a sentence that fits the crime.

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In closing, I would like to encourage all members of this House to support Bill C-37. I believe it provides amendments which recognize that the Young Offenders Act must obtain a balance of rehabilitation, public safety and deterrence. Unfortunately, in some cases the Young Offenders Act as it now stands does not adequately address the proper balancing of these interests.

This bill provides an excellent start on the process of reducing crime by youth by providing for measures that will take into consideration the issue of public safety. I encourage all members of this House to realize that any criminal justice system must have as its goal the balance of the objectives of public safety and rehabilitation. This is particularly true of any criminal system designed for young persons.

While it is true that young people are much more amenable as a whole to rehabilitation, the public must be adequately protected from all crime no matter who commits it. The amendments proposed to the Young Offenders Act as contained in Bill C-37 address the balancing of these objectives. This balance is lacking in the act as it now stands.

Finally, let me add my voice to others who have mentioned in this House that this bill does not represent the whole story of reducing crime by young persons. Most of the Young Offenders Act by definition deals with offences already committed. The other half of the equation of course is crime prevention.

In order for any initiative to reduce crime to be successful, the whole equation must be looked at. The 12th report of the Standing Committee on Justice released in 1993 pointed this out. It identified that in order to reduce crime we must attack its roots such as unemployment, illiteracy, physical and sexual abuse of children, the glorification of violence, and dysfunctional families.

(1650)

Studies have shown that crimes in neighbourhoods are drastically reduced when programs designed to keep youth occupied are instituted. Similarly, programs that attempt to help young Canadians get off the streets will also help prevent crime.

It is vital that the roots of crime be addressed in order that public safety is ensured. These steps in my opinion will be wise investments in the future of this country. Therefore I congratulate the Minister of Justice and the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in taking the first steps in reforming the Young Offenders Act with Bill C-37.

I also encourage the government to continue its efforts to eradicate crime by taking the initiatives that aim at preventing crime before it is committed.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member finished off by congratulating the minister for taking the first steps. Perhaps we could say they are

baby steps. Why not bring in a bill that would comprehensively deal with the problems of the Young Offenders Act?

At the beginning of her speech, the member talked about the importance of rehabilitation. The problem with youth crime is that many young offenders have never been habilitated in the first place. Society needs to respond to protect itself while respecting due process and offender needs.

Throughout her speech, the member recounted the problems very clearly, but does she believe that Bill C-37 will fix the problems identified? I think not.

She talked at length about the reverse onus provision and the whole procedure of transfers especially for 16 and 17-year olds. Perhaps she might address herself to the mind that it is basically an admission that the Young Offenders Act is fundamentally flawed for 16 and 17-year olds.

This brings up the topic that if we have to spend so much time dealing with the special problems for 16 and 17-year olds then the act is fundamentally flawed. Really it deals with the wrong set of kids and 16 and 17-year olds should be dealt with in adult court.

The member repeatedly cited the problems and the dilemmas but then made that unreasonable leap of faith that Bill C-37 is appropriate in responding to the problems that she cites.

However, I was encouraged that the member acknowledged the notion of victims in the process. I would ask her, would she then advocate or be willing to support the giving of legal standing to victims in the young offender court?

Mrs. Payne: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. As I stated at the beginning of my comments, this bill is not perfect. It is a first step toward revamping the present act.

To speak to the comment he made on the victims of crime, as we go along with this bill and the amendments that will come subsequent to this process, these facts will be dealt with in time. It is certainly a problem and one I am sure the committee will be looking at in the future.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in his latest report the Auditor General took what I consider to be a major step forward in discharging the duties of his office.

In addition to the traditional accounts of waste and questionable accounting practices, this time around he pointed out that a major cause of wasted money—and in my view this is the major cause—is not overpaid civil servants, the redecorating of offices, or the wasting of staples and paper clips. The problem the Auditor General focused on this time around is that we spend billions of dollars a year on programs without ever saying what the programs are intended to achieve, or how we measure their success in achieving their goals.

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It is not hard to think of a government program to which this criticism applies. Actually it is hard to think of one that it does not apply to. We have social programs that hurt society. We have family programs that destroy families. We have aboriginal programs that keep Canada's Indians from ever achieving self-sufficiency. We have trade programs that discourage free trade. We have expenditure control legislation that allows spending to spiral out of control, and so on. It is not a pretty sight.

(1655)

Every time one of these programs fails, the solution is to spend more money. We never ask what we are trying to do, how we will know whether or not we have achieved it, and when we will shut the program down if we do not see some success.

Getting to the Young Offenders Act, what is it supposed to be doing? Is it doing it? How can we tell? If it is not, at what point do we change our approach?

The purpose of the Young Offenders Act is quite clear. It is intended to draw a distinction between hardened adult offenders on the one hand and juveniles on the other. Then it is intended to separate the hardened juvenile offender from the kid who got in with the wrong crowd and made a foolish mistake. Most of us would agree that the kid who made a foolish mistake and that kid alone deserves a second chance.

I am sure many members are thinking: "Come off it, Mike. In this country we do not hold hardened adult criminals responsible either", and this is sadly true. It is difficult to pick up a newspaper today without seeing some dreadful tale of an innocent person abused or slaughtered by someone who ought still to be in prison serving out their sentence. Perhaps our governments do not take crime seriously even by adults, but the public wants them to and the Liberals ignore that desire at their grave peril.

Last time the Liberals formed the government the public got so sick of their arrogance that it reduced them to some 40 seats in Parliament in the 1984 election. Let me serve notice here and now that if the Prime Minister and the cabinet ignore public feelings about crime, that will be the good old days for the Liberal Party.

If the Liberals hope to avoid such a debacle, there are so many things they are doing that they had better not. They had better not raise taxes for one thing. They had better not keep spending more money than they take in for another. They had better apply the Auditor General's critique to their entire crime policy. Is crime being deterred? How do we measure it? If it is not, how do we change the law so that it is?

To help the Liberals in this unfamiliar exercise of considering whether what they are doing is actually working, I would like to start by applying the Auditor General's criteria to the Young Offenders Act and to these amendments to it.

The Young Offenders Act is supposed to give a second chance to those who deserve it. Is that what it is doing? Or is it just giving a licence to those under 18 to commit crimes? How can we tell? It seems quite simple to me.

If the Young Offenders Act is working, those youths who are given light sentences, who have their records sealed when they reach the age of majority, who receive no punishment at all for their misdeeds, should subsequently turn out to be better citizens than those who are selected for more severe punishment. Young people who get into trouble with the law should be less inclined to continue their criminal careers into adulthood than before there was the Young Offenders Act.

In short, if the Young Offenders Act is working, we would either have no more youth crime than we had in the past or perhaps a little bit more but a much lower rate of juvenile delinquents going on to become adult criminals. If not, if youth crime is skyrocketing and young offenders who receive a light slap on the wrist for serious acts like robbery, assault, even rape and murder go on to commit serious crimes as adults, then the Young Offenders Act is failing.

To me, the scariest possibility would be that the young thugs are manifesting an increasingly obvious awareness that they are beyond the reach of the law because of the Young Offenders Act, that they are responding rationally to the incentives government has built into its policies. That would be easy to measure too. Just look to see when the Young Offenders Act came into force and then after a few years delay when teenagers came to understand these provisions youth crime skyrocketed.

I wonder whether the government bothers to keep statistics on these questions and if it does, whether it will release them. I wonder whether we had less youth crime before the Young Offenders Act or more. I wonder what proportion of those who receive lenient sentences or have their records sealed when they turn 18 go on to commit more serious crimes as opposed to those who used to receive a stiff punishment for an evil act.

(1700)

I am submitting these as Order Paper questions because as Canadians we have a right to know what is going on. That includes knowing whether the Minister of Justice knows or cares whether the Young Offenders Act is working. If it turns out that when measured adequately against clear criteria the Young Offenders Act is the failure it seems to be, then I wonder something else. I wonder what the government's priorities are.

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Does the Minister of Justice think that his primary and overwhelming responsibility is protecting the lives, liberties and property of Canadian citizens and does he measure each of his initiatives against that criterion? Or is he busy trying to turn us all into socially aware, personally tolerant, cappuccino drinking, fluently trilingual citizens of the global village of the 21st century? Is he too caught up in his social engineering to protect society as it now exists?

Some will doubtless believe I am being unfair to the minister. Some will doubtless maintain that the justice minister knows exactly what the Young Offenders Act and these amendments to it are supposed to achieve. And he knows exactly how to measure success.

The Young Offenders Act, some will tell me, is part of a grand social engineering project of this and previous Liberal governments. It is the abolition of personal responsibility. These people will further tell me that the Minister of Justice knows exactly what the amendments are intended to achieve. They are intended to deceive the bumpkins out in the hinterland into thinking that crime is being punished and innocence rewarded so that the project of relieving us all of responsibility can proceed unmolested.

These people will tell me that the justice minister has very clear ideas how to measure his success on this project. They will say that if the justice minister can get the polls to say Canadians think he is cracking down on youth crime, he will not actually have to hold murderous young thugs accountable for their acts of evil. I do not think so.

I prefer to be charitable and assume that the justice minister and the Liberals are so convinced of their divine right to rule over Canadians and reshape them for their own good that they do not bother asking themselves whether what they are doing is working.

That is why I have risen in the Chamber today, to tell the justice minister as clearly and forcefully as I can that when his party was elected on the promise of a better yesterday, voters had in mind a time when jobs were more secure, the national debt was far lower and the streets were a lot safer. That is what they want to come back, not to the crazy experiments and wild excesses of the Trudeau years.

I hope the Minister of Justice, the Prime Minister and the entire government understand that Canadians really do believe and cherish individual responsibility. They overwhelmingly favour the right to own property. They overwhelmingly favour politicians who listen to their constituents. They overwhelmingly favour the right of law-abiding citizens to live in freedom and in security. And they overwhelmingly favour tougher action against crime and criminals of whatever age.

I call on the Minister of Justice, the Prime Minister and the government to take back this legislation and to repudiate the

entire approach behind it. I call on them to recognize that the most primary duty of a government is to protect the lives, liberty and property of its citizens from force and fraud.

I call on them to develop and make public a set of standards for measuring the success or failure of the Young Offenders Act against this goal. And I call on them to amend it so that it works or abolish it if it cannot be made to work.

Enough of softness on crime. Enough coddling. Enough punishing the innocent and pardoning the guilty. Either they do it now or the Reform government does it after 1997 while they collect their undeserved pensions and write their wistful memoirs.

That would be simple justice. Simple justice is what the Canadian public wants and simple justice is what the Reform Party is going to give them.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member. He acknowledges how much we are doing positively and how many millions we are spending within the juvenile justice system to respond to juvenile crime. Sometimes we do not hear about that but a lot of wonderful things are being done and great effort is made throughout the country within the juvenile justice system. It is not a matter of either or, but a great amount of resources are being spent.

(1705)

He makes the point that we must always evaluate our social programs for what is actually delivered. It is a point that must not be forgotten, and he mentions the role of the Auditor General in that.

The member reflects the experience of the community and how the message has been sent by the operations of the Young Offenders Act. He points out that we have had the Young Offenders Act for 10 years, and if it was working properly it would have acquired the acceptance of the community. The opposite is true. The community's experience with the act has resulted in the act's repudiation and a lack of confidence that it would have earned if it was working properly.

The member also pointed out the fact that the Young Offenders Act represents a Liberal social philosophy that is really not reflective of mainstream Canadian values. He talked about the issue of community accountability. The final measure of what should be done with the Young Offenders Act is, what does the public want?

Mr. Scott (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments and I would reiterate what I said in my intervention. We have to measure the success of our programs against clear criteria. We have to evaluate whether or not the legislation that is in effect right now or legislation that is brought into the House is actually working.

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The Auditor General said in his report that so many of the things the government does, fails. It fails the test of accountability. It does not achieve the lofty goals that it sets out to achieve. The Young Offenders Act is another example of that very deep malaise that sits in our federal government and has for a long time.

The programs that are brought into the House or that are on the books right now have to be evaluated in clear terms. It has to be demonstrated they actually work and that Canadians are satisfied with them.

Clearly Canadians from coast to coast are not satisfied with the Young Offenders Act and they will not be satisfied with the amendments as proposed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to speak on this bill, this afternoon.

[*English*]

We are attempting to reconcile two views; one which looks at what one would refer to as tough treatment, incarceration, dealing with young people who create situations that are unacceptable to society in a very direct and sometimes I would suggest almost brutal kind of way.

On the other hand, another group of people somehow believe that if you do not look at youth crime, and if you are patient and understanding and soft, that it will go away. Surely the answer lies somewhere in the middle. Surely there is a balance to be struck.

This is what the bill is all about. It attempts to reconcile two views. It attempts to establish a correct balance, and that correct balance would obviously vary according to the values that an individual holds.

We are asked to define what is a fair response. What is a just response? What is a correct response to a crime situation when it is undertaken by a young man or woman? That is extremely difficult. I do not pretend to have all of the answers and it would be presumptuous of me to suggest that I do.

I want to share some ideas in the spirit of debate to try to address a very serious situation. I do not believe that you can wish it away and it is simply going to disappear. I do not believe that incarceration and rough treatment is the answer either.

(1710)

The government has to manage. It has to protect society. At the same time, simply putting people away does not solve the problem. It does not even come close to solving the problem.

One can look at rough treatment or direct treatment or incarceration. A lot of people would say, "not pandering to

those criminals". Do they look at the success rate of reacting that way? What happens when we put people away? What are the costs when people are put away? We do not talk about that. There are costs. It costs a lot of money to detain people today. Obviously it has to be done because society has to be protected in certain circumstances. As a solution it is not only costly but I think it is extremely dysfunctional.

Look at the people who are put away. Since they are young people many of them are eventually released. Once they are released how many go on to integrate into society and lead productive lives? What is the success rate of that kind of approach?

Pretending that no problems exist will not resolve anything. We have to acknowledge that there are difficulties in society that are caused by real reasons. The real challenge to us as parliamentarians, as members of Canadian society, is to find out why it is that people commit crimes.

Some people suggest there are good and bad people. That is too simplistic. There are people who along the way, for a variety of reasons that we do not always understand nearly as well as we should, commit criminal behaviour that is totally unacceptable to society. That is where the challenge lies. If we could understand that, we could respond. In responding to that we could cut down the amount of crime in society. It would be much less costly, much less dysfunctional and a much more humane and satisfying kind of way of dealing with our fellow human being whether he or she is or is not a criminal.

[*Translation*]

We are trying to strike a balance between those who feel that imprisonment is the solution and those who feel that patience and education will eventually bring an end to this type of violence, abuse and criminal behaviour.

[*English*]

The bill includes a number of serious measures. I am not disappointed when I hear people suggest other or additional measures. That does not bother me. What does bother me is when the efforts of a very prominent Canadian are belittled, a justice minister who knows a lot about the law and criminal behaviour and who has taken the time to consult widely. Then we pose as supposed experts and simply belittle that which he has produced. That is arrogance.

Mr. Speaker, I know you would agree with me that when members on the opposite side suggest that members of our party are arrogant, there is no greater arrogance than pretending that one is an expert, that one has all of the solutions to all of the complex problems of society when one in fact does not. They come forward with simple, glib, catchy little solutions that pretend to resolve, so they can go away and suggest they are really listening to people and applying those solutions, and they

are going to correct the ills of society, that is arrogance. That is the most profound arrogance that one can find.

Unfortunately we find it a great deal in some members of the House. Some of them are raising their hands. I wish the camera could catch them right now so their electors could see firsthand who they are. Unfortunately that is not possible. Perhaps they will have the courage to get up and ask question, so we can have a bit of a debate. I can say a few more things to them then.

The bill includes increased sentences. Has anyone talked about that? It includes going to adult court in certain circumstances, when the crime is sufficiently serious to warrant that kind of situation. It includes extending the time served before being considered for parole. Has anyone from the opposite side mentioned that? It includes a better sharing of information among those people who deal with youth and criminal behaviour by young people.

(1715)

It also includes rehabilitation and treatment. That underlies the whole notion here. We want to rehabilitate. We want to be able to treat. We want to keep young people out of penal institutions. It is costly. It is dysfunctional. It does not do them any good as human beings. It protects society and, as I mentioned before, when protection is needed that is clearly what we would do.

The legislation includes the possibility of victim impact statements when sentencing, something that is now used in adult situations only. It talks about conditional supervision which is rare in a number of circumstances today but which is extended.

It talks about medical and psychological assessments. We no longer need to get consent. We can ask for those assessments to assist us in making better, more sensitive judgments that will be practical and address the real problems. A very important point is the possibility of restitution to the victims of crime. It has many components the opposite side has not addressed.

The major challenge to us today is twofold. It is to look at the legislation not in a partisan way but in the spirit of openness to see what merits support and what can be improved. Surely members on the opposite side see some positive features in the legislation. They can bring about suggestions that may lead to improvements. That is one of the challenges.

Another challenge before us today is to try to understand better than we do why it is these young people turn to criminal behaviour. If we could understand that we could prevent crime. Preventing crime would ensure that there is less incarceration,

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less cost to society and more productive lives being lived by young people.

[*Translation*]

I believe I am reaching the end of my speech. I will stop here, and I look forward to questions from my colleagues across the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are listening on this side of the House. Hopefully our constituents are listening at home as well.

I appreciate the hon. member's comments about Bill C-37, the reforms to the Young Offenders Act. He said that if we had any suggestions he would welcome them and that we should bring them forward to the government. We have been trying to do that at every opportunity in the debate on the Young Offenders Act and the specific bill.

It is high time young people who commit violent repeat offences are held accountable. We talk about that often. We should quit blaming society, family or peer pressure for their crimes; they have to be held accountable.

I wrote down from the hon. member's speech that he does not believe incarceration and rough treatment are the answer. Some people would differ when it comes to repeat offenders and offenders who commit horrendous violent crimes.

I would like to refer to a newspaper article and ask the hon. member if he would agree with this type of treatment and indicate whether it has some potential in Canada. I refer to an article about the Toulson Boot Camp in Maryland, U.S.A., which states:

Offenders between the ages of 17 and 25, sentenced to five years or less, can sign up for the six-month boot camp program at Toulson. And then you're home-free on parole.

The program at Toulson is modelled on the U.S. Marines' boot camps and about half the instructors are former marines. It emphasizes discipline and accountability.

So lifting a log isn't about lifting a log. It's about teamwork and overcoming adversity.

And moving a rock pile isn't just moving rocks. It's about being responsible for your actions and putting effort into work.

Toulson is a little different than other American boot camps, however.

That's because, in addition to the strict military regime and physical training, inmates also get job training, schooling (more than 70 per cent receive their high school equivalency diploma before they leave) and strictly supervised probation.

Boot camps without such measures find 50 to 70 per cent of their ex-cons end up back in the clink—the same rate as for conventional U.S. prisons where inmates can do whatever they want all day.

According to statistics compiled by Toulson officials, only 20 per cent of inmates released from the boot camp have reoffended.

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(1720)

In light of those statistics—he has asked for suggestions—would that perhaps be something that Canada should be looking at to put some of the violent repeat offenders into a structure such as that one and hopefully we would have a better success rate than we have had in our rehabilitation programs of the past?

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased by the question and I shall attempt to answer it in a responsible way.

Initially there was a comment from the member's party indicating that my party was prone to attempting all kinds of programs without appropriate evaluations. Then this hon. member puts forth the suggestion of a boot camp in his question, a particular boot camp where supposedly there has been some success.

I would caution in taking one example only and extrapolating it to the whole of youth crime or the whole of Canada. Whether one calls it boot camp or an alternative way of serving a sentence or being socialized differently, certainly we can look at it and we should. I know this is happening in certain parts of Canada.

I deplore, and my colleague did not suggest it, when some members indicate that boot camps sound tough. It sounds as if we are doing something when we are not doing anything except for symbolic reasons. I think that is hypocritical. I stress again that my colleague did not suggest that was the reason, but in some cases it is hypocritical, political and has no intent but trying to respond to a group of people out there that believes it is the answer to all youth crime.

Another point I want to make is a very important one. I take issue with my colleague in this regard, at least slightly. I did not say that incarceration was not the answer. I say that incarceration needed to be the answer in certain cases to protect society. He can check the blues. I did say that.

I hope my colleagues will listen very carefully but I wanted to make a point—and I am delighted to be able to make it again because it is an important one—for those who suggest that we should simply put people into an institution and throw away the key. There are some people who suggest that because they do not know any better. They do not understand the situation. They keep hoping for simplistic solutions. I simply suggest to them that approach to incarceration, with that kind of motivation, is not the answer.

We have a greater responsibility toward our fellow human beings, whether or not we like them, whether or not they are offenders, and that is to try to find out what we can do in a responsible way to ensure that they are contributing members of Canadian society.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on Bill C-37 as it addresses an area of concern to me and certainly a matter of concern to my constituents.

The Minister of Justice has responded quite quickly to public concern about problems with the Young Offenders Act through the amendments he is proposing in Bill C-37. As the government has been doing with other important pieces of legislation, the public has been consulted widely on possible changes and improvements both before the bill was drafted and tabled in the House and subsequently in committee.

(1725)

These amendments therefore are the reflection of wide public consultations and intended to respond to wide public concerns. That does not mean they will please everyone. Indeed critics have argued that they are either too harsh or too lenient. That usually means they are just about right.

The Young Offenders Act has had two purposes since its inception. One is the protection of society. The other is to interrupt the beginning of a criminal career and try our best to rehabilitate young offenders so that they do not become lifelong, hardened criminals.

In response to public concern the minister has amended the declaration of the principle of the act to make it clear that the primary objective of the youth system, however, must be the protection of society.

This can only be achieved if we have a real commitment as well to rehabilitation and to crime prevention. This means that for chronic serious offenders, judges are clearly authorized in the bill to have proper psychological or medical evaluations done.

It would be a tragedy, for instance, if young persons who might otherwise be entirely treatable, correctable and able to be put on a better path of life through medical or therapeutic help were simply to be punished and then released into society possibly to commit increasingly serious crimes as they become adults and lifelong criminals as they mature.

Increasing the sentences for first degree murder to a maximum of ten years and for second degree murder to seven years is something that I think has a great deal of public support. In making these sentencing changes the minister is addressing the need for sentencing for violent crimes that matches both the public's perception of the seriousness of the crime as well as the need to hold young offenders accountable for the damage their crimes have caused.

I do not mean only greater punishment but, again combining the two purposes of the bill, also more reasonable time for rehabilitation and counselling. Our party in opposition argued for these longer sentences simply because we knew there were

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some young offenders, even those who committed violent crimes, who could be rehabilitated. It cannot necessarily be done in the five years that the act currently allows.

As well by transferring 16 and 17-year olds to adult court when they have been charged with murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, aggravated sexual assault and aggravated assault, we are sending a message to violent offenders that they will be held accountable regardless of their age.

There is still the ability nevertheless for young persons to apply to have their cases remain in youth court if the objectives of protection of the public and rehabilitation can better be met there. The onus is on young offenders to prove that exceptional treatment rather than adult court is merited in their case.

We can see that the amendments are improvements of the current system that allow for flexibility only in exceptional cases. They will also allow police officers, school officials and welfare agencies to share information on young offenders for the better protection of public safety. It says to our communities that while the interest of young offenders must be taken into account there are other important interests and concerns.

For youth who have committed less serious crimes, alternatives to custody should be considered as the bill would allow. I return to the second purpose of the Young Offenders Act which is to ensure, wherever possible, that young offenders are given the opportunity to develop a better way of life and not continue with a life of crime.

Let us turn to fitting the punishment to the crime. The bill allows for the kinds of alternatives to custody as a method of restitution for the victim, or some type of community service that may be far more productive than the more traditional approaches of incarceration.

(1730)

These amendments as presented in Bill C-37 are not perfect solutions, nor are they the end of the process. They are improvements. They show Canadians that the government is serious about protecting their personal safety and their property. At the same time they offer the opportunity for rehabilitation where possible and feasible and for crime prevention.

Moreover, as the House is aware, the minister has asked the parliamentary committee of justice to undertake a thorough review of the Young Offenders Act. We realize that this is just a first step. This will provide the forum for additional changes and improvements to meet both purposes of the act, the protection of public safety and the rehabilitation wherever possible of young offenders.

These are issues that need to be addressed. We need to know why some of our young people are falling into criminal ways.

We do need to examine the relationship between youth services and the Young Offenders Act.

A very recent study has indicated that a violent child of six will become a violent adolescent and a violent adult. Right now we do not have services in our country or in our communities that are nearly adequate to turn that young child's life around at the age of six rather than waiting until the age of 16 when they are damaging themselves and others in a far more serious way.

We need to understand how the government can attack some of the underlying causes of crime such as poverty, family violence and drug abuse. Members opposite may not want to acknowledge that sometimes somebody else is responsible for the criminal behaviour of the young person. In many cases, far more than they would like to know about, criminal behaviour is very directly linked to sexual abuse as a child. Much as they would like to simply put the burden of proof on that 12, 13 or 14-year old young person, we as a society have to take some responsibility for those among that population who were abused in a society that failed to protect them.

The members opposite mentioned certain ways of dealing with young offenders. I think we have to be more open and that is why a more fundamental review can look at other methods of treating young offenders while they are in custody or under supervision of some kind. It is only by addressing these more fundamental issues that we will make real strides in keeping our youth out of the justice system and turning their lives around where possible when they come into conflict with the law.

We need to look at every possible investment toward keeping our society a healthy place for children to grow up so that future generations are not looking on our youth as a problem, a source of violence and a source of fear to our citizens and to our society.

As I said, this is the first step in that process. It is not the end of the process. I look forward to the Reform Party supporting the progress that is being made in this bill and participating fully in the ongoing debate about further improvements.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I suppose one concern of the Reform Party that I think has been fairly well expressed is the lack of success that the current YOA has had.

I wonder if the member could enlighten me on some things, for example the fact that 47 per cent of all cases where charges are made under the Young Offenders Act are for repeat offences; 19 per cent of all those charges are for the fifth offence under the Young Offenders Act.

(1735)

In her judgment, what in the amendments is going to actually change that? What in the amendments is really going to work to

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the resolution of that problem or do these amendments not touch the reality of the repeat offences?

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how those statistics compare with adult crime. However, what the member has just said is that 53 per cent of charges against young offenders are laid against first time offenders. They have never offended before. The fact that only 20 per cent have then gone on to offend more than twice is a fairly good indication to me that there is a reasonably high level of rehabilitation because of the act and the effect it has had since it was first implemented.

However, in the cases for which there is the greatest public concern, the kind of amendments that I think are going to make a substantial difference is for severe and violent crime, murder, assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault and so on, and the requirement to have the young person tried in adult court according to adult rules, the possibility of longer sentences, up to double what they are now.

I also feel that oftentimes when we do incarcerate young people we put them into a school of crime. We put them into contact with people who have been in the system perhaps more than once or twice, who are much more knowledgeable about crime and living off the avails or crime. That I do not think is a desirable situation.

I certainly believe in the requirement to look at non-custodial solutions, especially where the young person is being held directly accountable through compensation to the victim directly for the harm they have done or through community service to compensate the community directly for the harm that he or she has done to the community. Those are the kinds of measures, among others, that put a direct link between the crime that has been committed and the effects of that crime. To me that kind of discipline is a productive kind of discipline.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): This concludes the period of questions and comments and also concludes this stage of debate. As we continue third reading of this legislation, members will now have a maximum of 10-minute interventions without questions or comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since June 2, 1994, when Bill C-37 to amend the Young Offenders Act was tabled, I have been unable to convince myself that the federal government is seriously trying to make those of us in Parliament and the people in Quebec and the rest of Canada believe that its proposed reform will increase public protection.

As you know, I have more than 21 years' experience in teaching and have learned to trust. I have learned that, in life, you have to offer a second chance. I learned this during all those years. The debate, this debate, is simply a public relations

exercise by the government in an effort to reassure part of the population about its public institutions.

The reality is that the existing legislation contains all the provisions needed by the courts and crown prosecutors to give society proper protection. The problem is one of enforcing the provisions in the Young Offenders Act, and not a complete revision of it. In my view, changing the commas and periods in a text will not make it suddenly more effective.

Did the Minister of Justice first make sure that the existing Young Offenders Act no longer met the needs of the public and society before changing it? Did the Minister of Justice first take into account the many recommendations by the principal stakeholders?

(1740)

Considering that most authorities concerned want more latitude in enforcing the current legislation, and not a repressive and intimidating reform of the act, why is the Liberal government nevertheless going ahead with its crusade against young people?

We can only wonder why the federal government made this one of its key issues. The Liberals' red book holds the key. In fact, the Minister of Justice is using his role in the government merely to keep a purely partisan campaign promise, without regard for its economic, social and moral impact.

It is these kinds of actions which, in my opinion, cause taxpayers to become disillusioned with politics. Such displays of disregard for institutions and the duty of the elected is revolting to the taxpayers of Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Furthermore, I do not believe that an act should be amended just because 30 per cent of the population believes that crime is on the rise and that offences are becoming more violent, especially when current statistics prove the opposite. How many times will we have to say it? We will never resolve the problem of violence in society by sending people to jail earlier and earlier on in life.

Longer and heavier sentences, lowering the minimum age for assuming criminal responsibility and extending measures available to repress young people will not resolve the problem either—they will have the opposite effect. The proposed amendments to the bill counter the ultimate goal: protection of society and of young people.

During the last election campaign, I had the privilege—and I mean privilege—of visiting a halfway house, where some 20 young men lived. I spoke with them for over an hour about their future and I left the place firmly believing that they deserved a second chance, even though they had committed reprehensible acts.

I think that the government should concentrate on crime prevention programs. That is where emphasis should be put, and

these programs are our greatest challenge. That is the approach that Quebec is taking, with great success I might add.

In consequence, the bill's main objective should be reintegration. A long term crime prevention program, with the aim of deterring young offenders from continuing to act in a reprehensible way, is what is really needed.

On this issue, Quebec is sending a clear message to Ottawa: "Let us continue to resolve our problems in the way we see fit without imposing rules to follow or amendments that may satisfy other provinces, but do not fit Quebec's experience at all". This is another area where I think Quebec is distinct.

Quebec has a rich experience. Those looking for inspiration need look no further than Quebec's Youth Protection Act. In addition, the work and reports of Quebec's Department of Health and Social Services are also good sources of information. Finally, studies have been conducted recently in Quebec. These studies, the tailor made protection, the jointly devised plan, and the protection of young persons, more than legislation, bring out the valuable experience and background of the Quebec system, as well as a number of problems to be resolved to ensure more effective enforcement of the act.

(1745)

In Quebec, there is a well established consensus. The consensus in Quebec is that the principles and rights accorded to the child under Quebec legislation must be preserved, while at the same time stipulating the means of implementation and the adjustments required by social change and recent legislative reforms.

In regard to young offenders, Quebec's perspective and experience are diametrically opposed to the reforms proposed by the federal government. Quebec stresses rehabilitation while the federal government's proposals are repressive and hard-line. In other words, Quebec does not regard life terms with repeat offenders as a solution for young persons who are often grappling with serious family and social problems.

In conclusion, to ease matters the Minister of Justice could grant Quebec special status to allow us to preserve this credible experience in regard to protecting young persons and this moral and social duty towards young Quebecers.

[English]

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on these amendments to the Young Offenders Act. Like most communities, Guelph—Wellington is concerned about crime and the safety of our community. Its people welcome any initiative that encourages public protection and crime prevention.

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Young offenders are not new. The House of Commons enacted the Juvenile Delinquents Act in 1908. The government of the day believed that youth were not to be treated as criminals. Rather, the act stated that they should be treated as misdirected children in need of aid, encouragement, help and assistance. It sought to save children through social intervention. Almost 90 years later we are still concerned with giving children aid, encouragement and assistance.

My community of Guelph—Wellington knows the importance of children. We pride ourselves in providing quality education and preparing our children for their future. Our industry is one of the finest in the country, built to withstand radical changes in the marketplace and designed to be the forefront of technology so our children can remain in our community and become active participants in our society.

They are concerned about deficit reduction, not for their sake, but so their children and grandchildren will not be burdened by our excesses. Like almost every community in Canada, we are concerned about youth crime. We know the majority of our children are good and live their lives free of crime.

However, others do demand our attention. We are concerned about them. Programs like Guelph Change Now, a crisis and counselling service for youth, and START from the Second Chance Employment Counselling, aim to help young people, some young offenders, in housing and life skills.

My community knows the causes of youth crime are many. It wants this government here and now to deal with the issues of family violence, poverty and illiteracy. It also wants us to respond now to its dissatisfaction with the current treatment of violent young offenders.

Last June 16, I attended a community forum sponsored by the Guelph Mercury. The forum dealt with the Young Offenders Act. During the discussion it became apparent that Guelph—Wellington residents are concerned with the prevention of crime. They want more respect for the law by putting emphasis on the home, in the schools and on preventing young people from becoming criminals. They also want more money spent on rehabilitation. This was a clear message I received.

(1750)

Following the forum I wrote to the Minister of Justice and informed him that these people do not see the problem with legislation. Rather, they see the problem in the court room. They look at the courts as too lenient and so much so that our young people are no longer deterred by the sentencing. They ask me in this government to make sentencing tougher so that young people will realize that their actions will be punished.

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This legislation today responds to their concerns. My constituents have asked us to increase sentences for teenagers convicted of first and second degree murder. They believe that five years is not enough.

They want more young offenders tried in adult court when charged with serious personal injury offences and they want improved measures for information sharing between professionals. They know that it is often too easy for a young offender to fit between the cracks because school officials, police and child welfare agencies sometimes do not share information when the public may be at risk.

At that forum and in letters and telephone calls I received from constituents, they recognize the need for rehabilitation services. They contact me seeking ways to improve the judicial system and I have heard from parents whose children disregard their authority because they believe that they can safely hide behind provisions of the Young Offenders Act. This is not right.

These children may lose respect for authority because they believe that our system is too lenient. Mothers worry that their children from a very early age have learned not to respect the law. These parents and in many ways their children have asked us to respond. It is a clear call for help.

Guelph—Wellington residents want stiffer penalties for young offenders who commit serious crimes. They want victims to be able to make a statement if they so wish about how crime has affected them and they want stricter controls over the young offender who is in the community while serving probation and a quicker response if a youth should break the conditions of that release.

They want the courts to have as much information as possible when a young offender is sentenced. Currently young offenders must consent to treatment. This legislation responds to my constituents' concern for an effective response to chronic and serious young offenders.

I have said before that my constituents demand excellence in many of my speeches. They want legislation passed by the House that effectively deals with their concerns and improves the quality of life for them and their families.

This bill betters the Young Offenders Act and enables it to deal more effectively with serious youth crime. The changes proposed in this legislation help further protect our community where you and I live. Their aim is to make young people more responsible for their actions while recognizing the special circumstances of their youth.

They respond to the concerns of people in Guelph—Wellington and elsewhere in order to make our community better. Sergeant Brent Eden of the young offenders branch of the Guelph police force described to the people who attended the forum on the Young Offenders Act as concerned with making things better, not just blaming the system, not just blaming the police and not just blaming the government.

These people know that this legislation will make things better. They have told me that the police support this legislation. That is what they want from this government, that it is what they demand from this government.

These amendments continue our goals of offering aid, encouragement, help and assistance to our children. The goals are simple. Punish those who commit the crime and help rehabilitate these young people so that they can contribute to our society.

We want tough legislation which gives a clear message. We will not tolerate murder, assault and other criminal acts. We want to help our young people but we will not accept certain behaviour. This behaviour will be punished.

During the last federal election I promised the people of Guelph—Wellington that I would support reforms to the Young Offenders Act. It was asked many times of me. They want things to deter young people from committing crime, something to provide real justice and to rehabilitate our young people to help them build better lives. This legislation and the broad review which will be taken by the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs does just that.

These deserve our support. These respond to the concerns expressed by my constituents and people across Canada.

In its own platform, the Reform Party promised Canadians adequate punishment for young offenders. I look forward to its support for this bill because it keeps that promise as well.

The majority of our young people know that hard work and education will be the key for their success. They want to contribute to making our country better and to be a part of the Canadian dream. They want children of their own.

For their sake and for ours, I will support Bill C-37 and call on this House to vote in favour of this bill; legislation that aids, helps, assists and encourages our children and our future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It now being 5.55 p.m., the House will proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP)
moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of providing a fairer future for Atlantic Canada by adopting policies and programs to create jobs through initiative funds for co-operatives, encouraging small business, upgrading municipal infrastructures and diversifying single industry communities.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking the member for Moncton for seconding my motion. Basically, as the motion indicates, I am calling on the government to consider the advisability of providing a fairer future for Atlantic Canada by adopting policies and programs to create jobs through initiative funds for co-operatives, encouraging small business, upgrading municipal infrastructures and diversifying single industry communities.

Basically this motion is broad enough to include a major reassessment of government policy toward Atlantic Canada, a reassessment of whether those policies have been successful and an opportunity to consider maybe doing things in a rather different way.

What I will do is not spend too much time on the problems but put forward some ideas for solutions. I will draw upon the recent experience in Saskatchewan and British Columbia with regard to mechanisms for bringing together diverse groups in our society with the aim of building a vision for the future to which we can all be committed and to which we can then direct government policy and regulation.

Atlantic Canada has long been a region dependent on its natural resources and on the involvement of the public sector. Both have been allowed to decline as government policies and private sector decisions have conspired to create an environment that undermines long term development and sustainability of many of the communities and economies of the region.

The economic and political policies of the past that have resulted in the underdevelopment of the Atlantic region must be challenged and overcome. Policies that have promoted the export of unprocessed and semi-processed resources along with jobs that otherwise might be involved in that value added activity must be replaced with value added production and the skilled jobs that accompany those processes.

This will require the federal and provincial governments to be much more involved with the local communities in reaching this goal. Also we have to be cognizant of the impact of federal cutbacks over the last decade to the support structure of both

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rural and urban life in Atlantic Canada and be prepared to respond to those extra difficulties.

The future course of economic development must begin with the involvement of people in their communities working with their governments. This will require a new partnership with the federal government, the people, the communities and institutions; a partnership unlike any relationship that currently exists in Atlantic Canada.

In order to make that relationship work we must commit ourselves to some real and achievable goals. It should not be unreasonable to expect in Atlantic Canada that we move toward full employment; that we move toward a full opportunity economy which builds on the diversity of Atlantic Canada and ensures the full participation of women, youth, aboriginal people, visible minorities and people with disabilities.

(1800)

It should be within our realm of opportunity to consider the importance of community involvement and the community control of economic decision-making. We should be building an economy based on environmentally sustainable economic principles. Nowhere other than in the Atlantic provinces have we seen the impact of not ensuring that our economic policies are environmentally sustainable.

We should be able to ensure the protection and the improvement of our social programs to support Atlantic Canadians in their times of difficulty between jobs and particularly now when we see that a major resource is simply not there to support the population as it did previously.

We need a new emphasis on co-operative development, an emphasis that places people and their communities ahead of corporate profit. We also need transportation systems that meet the needs of the regions so that products made within the region can effectively be moved to markets.

Atlantic regional development is not just about increasing incomes. Development is a process by which human capabilities and natural resources combine to fulfil social, cultural, political, psychological and material needs. This is a process in which increased self-reliance, independence of individuals, communities and the region are achieved by building on the strength that thrives on the interdependence of equals.

As someone who lived in Atlantic Canada for more than a decade, there are no more independent people in the country, wanting to work together for the benefit of all rather than work against each other so that only a few benefit.

Development can only be sustained if it strengthens the social fabric, building a consensus as to goals, values and means and focusing on increased productivity and the needs and potential of those in society, particularly the most disadvantaged. An integral component of real economic development strategy for

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Atlantic Canada is the reduction of the inequity of incomes and the removal of the pain of poverty for so many of our citizens. It is clear from the writings of a wide range of economists that inequality of income is a major drain on economic growth.

These goals of building together will only be achieved if the process is from the bottom up, with people participating in the decisions that affect them. People in communities must recognize that they have a capacity and a responsibility to shape and direct the development process at all levels. That capacity and responsibility must be encouraged through the planning process and through the role that government plays.

The regional development policies of previous governments have always been controlled from the top down. Surely we believe that people in the community have the best interests of that community at heart. People who are rooted in a community have the most at stake in evaluating and encouraging sustainable development. It is critical that we use that resource, that understanding and that community commitment. We should support community economic development that gives communities a true sense of ownership and increases local control over the economy.

It has been very clear that allowing people to come in from outside, reap the profits and leave is a devastating strategy and one that has long term negative effects, not long term beneficial effects. As much as possible development should be owned and managed locally, be located within the community, provide work for local people, make use of local materials and serve community needs for products and services. The best types of economic development activities are those that maintain a community focus.

Let me make one more general comment with regard to this. If economic development is to work in Atlantic Canada it must pursue the principle of economic self-reliance. It is no longer possible in this country, if it ever was possible, to maintain industries and economic units that are no longer efficient. We need to pursue a principle of economic self-reliance, harnessing all of its resources to both determine and meet the needs of the people of Atlantic Canada. As I have said, that means the control of the resources and economic institutions must be much more firmly in the hands of Atlantic Canadians.

(1805)

In order to ensure that community economic development objectives are met, one strategy would be to encourage the development of locally based community development organizations. They could represent all sectors of the community.

Their function could be to oversee discussions, decisions and implementation of development projects.

This would ensure that the communities, in co-operation with the private and public sectors, would be instrumental in making decisions about the kind of development that would occur and would be able to ensure the community would benefit most from that development.

They could be coalitions of local, social, business, financial and labour organizations, as well as co-operatives and governments. They could perform the function of co-ordinating development within those various regions. They could be responsible for the allocation of whatever public funds might be available within those regions to ensure that those funds are used to the best possible advantage.

One very good example of how this could work is in Cape Breton. An organization called New Dawn Enterprises, which I have visited in the past, has assisted in developing a network of firms and facilities throughout Cape Breton. This development corporation holds assets of some \$10 million and has become involved in a very wide range of activities from construction to real estate to care for the elderly. There are examples within Atlantic Canada we could learn from and utilize across the whole region.

Across Atlantic Canada there is a large, effective, efficient and responsive network of co-operatives we could also build on. Atlantic Canadians have built a co-operative movement which attests to their resilience and creativity in the face of adversity. Those co-operatives maintain jobs in the communities, provide services to the communities and provide local control to ensure that local needs are met. People have a stake in those enterprises and they often are more productive as a result.

It is necessary to ensure, at both the federal and provincial levels of government, that we remove any barriers to co-operative development and that we ensure and encourage the development of co-operatives across the region.

This is clearly an integral part of the development of Atlantic Canada. In the last decade, 1980 to 1989, small firms created 90 per cent of the new jobs in Atlantic Canada, while large firms saw reductions in employment capacities.

A report that was done by Enterprise Cape Breton found it was locally based operations which were the most successful. Projects that received \$100,000 or less in the form of support had a success rate of 72 per cent, at an average cost of \$23,000 per job, while those projects receiving \$1 million or more had a failure rate of 71 per cent, with an average cost of \$154,000 per job. The proof in Atlantic Canada is that it is small business that is going

to create jobs, and it is small business on which we should focus our activities.

The agencies that we have in operation in Atlantic Canada also need to be reconsidered. As I have pointed out they have not worked very well. Their support, in large sums of money, to large enterprises have not given benefit to the community as one would have wanted. However, support in small sums to small businesses have done so. We need to ensure that the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency really becomes an advocate for employment creation and economic development in the region and is not used, as it has been in that past, as a political slush fund. We need to reconsider and reassess the agencies that we use as arms of government in the development of Atlantic Canada.

I have talked about co-operatives but credit unions also have an important role in Atlantic Canada and we need to encourage them as well. I will give one example of a real success story to show how credit unions can really contribute to the economic development of the region.

In 1984, in Eagle River, Labrador, the Bank of Montreal closed its branch saying it was no longer a viable operation, which is a fairly familiar picture across Canada. With the aid of the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company the community was able to establish its own credit union. In fact, it had the co-operation of the *caisse populaire* located in the neighbouring Quebec community. The credit union has been able to provide basic essential financial services to people in that area.

(1810)

In the less than four years that this financial institution has existed it has provided more than \$3 million in loans to local residents. It is a viable, profitable and locally owned enterprise, showing that credit unions can have a major role to play in the development of Atlantic Canada and across the country.

We should do what we can to support and nurture credit unions, especially those that are small and just beginning and need some support. There are many things that we can do. For example, governments could use credit unions much more than they do now as the depositories of funds or as their current accounts.

Much of Atlantic Canada is made up of single industry towns. Those are vulnerable communities, vulnerable economic units. Atlantic Canada is fortunate to have such resources in our communities but they must be managed by those who have the greatest stake in ensuring the long term viability of those resources in those communities, the people themselves.

Several resource based industries are in crisis and we should not tolerate that situation any longer. The most obvious of course is the fishery. Many of us today received representations indicating that a stock that had not been fished all that much in

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the past, turbot, is now under serious threat as a result of overfishing. It is important for Canada to exert its jurisdictional power to make sure that this resource does not go the way of the cod stocks which we all know so much about.

It is important for single industry towns, based on natural resources and non-renewable resources, to be much more effectively upgraded in the interest of the communities in which they operate.

I will not say any more about the fisheries. We all know what a disaster that has been. It is primarily a disaster because of federal policy mismanagement over the last few years, something we cannot do anything about now but something we do have to remember and treat as a lesson in the future.

The same sorts of concerns can be expressed about the forestry industry. In comparison to forestry industries in the rest of the world, a great proportion of forestry in Atlantic Canada is privately owned: New Brunswick, 49 per cent; Nova Scotia, about 70 per cent. This resource has not been used for the benefit of those living in Atlantic Canada but rather to benefit the corporations that control it and, which incidentally, pursue forestry practices that in their home countries they would not be able to pursue.

Therefore, we have to ensure that resource is also one for the benefit of the communities in question and for the benefit of Atlantic Canada. It must be developed in a way that is sustainable, to provide jobs and economic opportunities for Atlantic Canadians well into the future and ensure that young people from Atlantic Canada do not have to leave their homes in order to find economic opportunity.

In my last few moments I would like to make a quick reference to developments in two provinces and two resource based provinces which might be of use in considering how to develop Atlantic Canada. Let me first take the example of British Columbia and the arrangements that have been made there in order to develop the forestry industry.

We know that in the past there has been enormous tension between the forestry companies and environmentalists, between communities and environmentalists, the workers in the forestry industry and environmentalists. We know we have to resolve those differences.

What British Columbia did in a unique way was bring those different interests together and work with them to find a vision for the future of that region. Everyone made sacrifices and everyone gained. However, in the end there was a common vision adopted to which everyone could be committed and to which everyone could work. That is the clear focus. We have to change the way in which we consider economic development. We have to make sure we all work together to the best advantage of all.

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(1815)

I would certainly recommend that B.C. approach Atlantic Canadians and the federal-provincial governments, labour unions within the province, the business community, the communities themselves and environmentalists within Atlantic Canada. That should be pursued as a goal for economic opportunity development in the region.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as an Atlantic Canadian it is a pleasure to speak on this motion. The motion by the NDP member strikes to the core of what we are talking about in Atlantic Canada as we try to improve our lot and to become a have part of our country.

I would like to talk about the infrastructure program. I would also like to talk about my own community of greater Moncton. It shares some of the problems alluded to in the motion, particularly having a single industry. The Canadian National Railway employed upward of 5,000 people and will effectively close. What does that mean to a community such as Moncton and what we have been able to do both on our own and with assistance? I will quickly talk about the infrastructure program and then move on to my own experiences.

The infrastructure program is near and dear to my heart. In my other life as mayor and councillor of the city of Moncton, I had the good fortune to be on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities task force dealing with infrastructure. It was a program which was advocated for many years and it took the Liberal government to actually put it into effect. We are seeing massive benefits throughout the country, particularly in Atlantic Canada.

In my own riding of Moncton we were given roughly \$4 million of federal funding for the infrastructure program. To date with the projects that we have on the go in our community, we are going to see an investment of roughly \$30 million.

For a Canadian federal government program, seeing an investment of \$4 million turn into \$30 million is an investment and not an expenditure. That is why the infrastructure program works in Atlantic Canada. That is why it is of benefit.

I would like to refer the House to some of the things that are happening as a result of the infrastructure program in Atlantic Canada. These agreements represent a total federal investment in the Atlantic region of \$181 million. That in turn will generate equal investments on behalf of the provinces and the municipalities for a total investment of \$540 million into the Atlantic economy resulting from the Canada infrastructure program.

It is estimated that over 9,500 person years of employment will be created in the region, both on and off the project sites across Atlantic Canada. As of December 31, 1994 over 575 projects have already been approved in Atlantic Canada. This

represents a total investment of \$450 million in the Atlantic Canada economy and will create over 7,300 jobs in the region.

Projects under way under the infrastructure agreements in the Atlantic region range from installation and upgrading of sewer systems to rebuilding roadways and linking up public schools to the electronic highway.

More than 60 per cent of the federal dollars committed in the Atlantic region are for water and sewer projects. Almost 12 per cent of the federal investment is to construct and repair municipal roads. Another 16 per cent is committed for community based projects. High technology projects are also being supported and account for 4 per cent of the federal government contribution.

Those are all good projects, projects that really make things happen in Atlantic Canada. That is why the infrastructure program is a success.

We are looking for partnerships. We are looking for spinoffs associated with this program. That is what we have done in my riding of Moncton and what we have done throughout Atlantic Canada.

When we see an investment of roughly \$200 million in Atlantic Canada spinning off to roughly \$600 million and then going higher to \$800 million and \$900 million, this is an investment, not an expenditure.

We listen to Reform Party members on their position with respect to the infrastructure program but mind you, they still take the dollars when it comes to their ridings. When we listen to what they say about Atlantic Canada and where we should be, the Reform Party is of the view that the only solution offered to Atlantic Canada is to tell them to move. "Get them out of Atlantic Canada," is the Reform Party solution.

(1820)

To quote the Reform Party again, its finance critic says: "The rest of Canada is not prepared to foot the bill for Atlantic Canada". There is no bill. We are making a contribution in this country. We are making things happen and the Reform Party's view is: "Tell them to move". Shame on them.

To quote the Reform Party's budget on page 34: "There would be some short term costs associated with fiscal retrenchment. These costs would come primarily in the form of adjustments that economic sectors and regions of our economy most dependent on government transfers would have to make". The code words: Atlantic Canada.

Going on to page 36: "Under the Reform budget, the short term employment impact of spending and deficit reduction is negative but manageable". It will not be manageable in Atlantic Canada if it goes through with its program to eliminate ACOA, which has created 42,000 jobs in its first five years and has stimulated major private sector investments of \$2.4 billion.

ACOA pays for itself. It is an investment that generates \$4.2 dollars of benefit for every dollar of public funding spent.

We are not prepared to sign on to the Reform Party budget that would see 65,000 Atlantic Canadians out of work over the next five years. We are not signing on for the principle that we should move somewhere else because Atlantic Canada, in my humble opinion, is the best place in all of Canada in which to live.

I want to talk about a community that has pulled itself up by the bootstraps. That is my community of greater Moncton. We experienced the upper Canadian and western Canada view that we should just shut down everything in Atlantic Canada. We lost Eaton's catalogue, Swift's and the Canadian National Railway Company. They were all major employers in our community.

We turned around and made investments in our community. We made investments in our downtown and in a new way of doing things. Arising out of those investments now is the fastest growing community in Atlantic Canada, greater Moncton. For the edification of the Reform Party *The Wall Street Journal* wrote about the community of greater Moncton: "It is the call centre for North America. It is the centre that is showing the way, the new wave of the new economy, to the rest of Canada and to North America".

An hon. member: They are not real jobs.

Mr. Rideout: They are real jobs. We are employing people. On top of that, we recognized that we were a bilingual community and that was an asset. We built on l'Université de Moncton, on the bilingual nature of our community. Now we are employing people and making things happen.

These people do not want to move. They want to stay in Moncton. They want to stay in Atlantic Canada. We even have people coming from British Columbia who now want to live in our community. We are seeing a migration to Moncton rather than away from it.

I say to Reform Party members: They should rethink their budget and their approach to regional development. Recognize that Atlantic Canada is a great place to be. It is going to be a have part of this country in the not too distant future because we are taking advantage of those investments this Liberal government is giving us. That is why we support this motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition critic on regional development, I rise to participate in this debate on the motion put forward by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing.

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First of all, I feel that elected representatives from all parts of Canada are all concerned about economic development. This is extremely important under the current economic conditions, especially since we know that it is essential to create jobs to stop stagnating and start moving toward economic and structural development.

(1825)

I am a little surprised by the motion. This motion respecting federal assistance for Atlantic Canada's economic development, which was put forward by my colleague from Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, touches on, among other things, the importance of a better future for the Maritimes. This concern is quite commendable, in my opinion.

With all due respect, this motion reflects a certain lack of knowledge about the federal government's regional development policies and about Quebec's traditional demands regarding regional development.

I wish to state in this House my position on this motion concerning equity in federal contributions to Atlantic Canada's regional development. The Bloc Québécois must, of course, show some opposition to such a motion.

Allow me in the next few minutes to elaborate on some of the reasons why Quebec must give priority to its own regional development.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency or ACOA is the federal government's main regional development agency in Atlantic Canada. The ACOA mostly deals with small business, helping to launch new ventures and modernize existing companies. On November 30, 1993, the federal government's contribution amounted to \$865 million out of the total \$1 billion budget forecast, or \$431 per capita.

Until very recently, the federal government's main regional development agency in Quebec was the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec or FORDQ. Since the FORDQ was created in 1991, its mandate has been to emphasize long-term economic development and job creation.

However, given its limited financial resources, the FORDQ will pay more attention to small business by offering information and analysis services and promoting exports. This is a far cry from the basic principles of local development.

Under these circumstances, why would Quebec want to invest additional public funds in Atlantic Canada? On July 20, 1994, the federal government's share—close to \$350 million—had still not been committed in Quebec. The total budget for the economic and regional development agreement is \$1.6 billion, or, and this is the total budget, \$64 per capita in Quebec.

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In Western Canada, in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Western Economic Diversification Canada or WED is the main federal vehicle for regional development.

As of November 30, 1993, spending under these programs totalled \$936 million. The ERDA provides for a budget of \$1.12 billion or \$160 per capita. That is, very briefly, what regional development looks like in Canada, and I want the hon. member to pay attention to these figures and this breakdown of federal regional development assistance.

There is no common standard for the West, the Maritimes and Quebec. The federal contribution to these agreements is \$64 per capita in Quebec, compared to \$160 in the western provinces and \$431 in the Atlantic provinces.

So why should Quebec support a motion that would increase federal assistance to the Atlantic provinces, when some provinces seem to be more equal than others?

The 1993 and 1994 Estimates indicate that the federal government spends less on regional development in Quebec than anywhere else. In fact, the budget for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is \$314 million, the budget for the Department of Western Economic Diversification is \$238 million, and the budget for the FORDQ is \$232 million.

However, the total population of these other provinces is less than the total population of Quebec.

(1830)

In his last budget, the finance minister announced a cut of \$70 million in the subsidies and contributions for the FORDQ. Quebec's regions are the big losers as far as federal funding is concerned. Since 1983, annual federal funding for regional development increased only 50 per cent in Quebec, but 250 per cent in the Maritimes and 300 per cent in the West.

In other words, through the federal government, Quebec funds regional development programs and policies it is not in a position to implement in its own regions. The 1993-94 budget for the Quebec Regional Affairs Secretariat is for \$71 million, while Quebec's part under agreements concluded with the west and the maritimes amounts to \$550 million, or 25 per cent of the \$2.2 billion federal budget.

Ottawa's regional development policies are clearly discriminatory toward Quebec. If the amount Quebec receives from the federal government in transfer payments and for all kinds of national programs is approximately equal to the tax it pays to the federal government, this is among other things thanks to transfer payments earmarked for income security and the unemployment insurance program. In other words, for want of a true regional development policy in Quebec, the federal government is maintaining poverty and unemployment there. This is why Quebec is

calling for and has for years called for the repatriation of all regional development responsibilities. The Bloc Québécois therefore has no choice but to oppose a motion entailing an increase in moneys for regional development in the maritimes.

Regional development is of course not a distinct area of jurisdiction in the Canadian constitution, as a result of which Quebec is forced to engage in endless negotiations to arrive at agreements. Unfailingly, these agreements ultimately authorize the federal government to interfere repeatedly and awkwardly in regional development. It is interference. The regions in Quebec suffer from duplication of efforts in regional development matters and from the lack of consistency in government policy.

Which brings us back to what the present Liberal government is doing, namely structural duplication giving rise to considerable operating costs as opposed to real investments in development, as well as multiplicity of government parties involved which frequently results in confusion among regional stakeholders. Quebec has adopted an overall regional development plan, an overall plan for each of its sixteen administrative regions. This is why, and justly so, it wants to get back from the federal government the resources it should receive for regional development. Let us first establish fairness in redistributing federal moneys for regional development before broaching the subject of the gap between what Quebec and other regions in Canada receive.

[English]

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the motion. It was not clear to me in the original motion whether or not the suggestion was being made to put more money into Atlantic Canada. If that is the case we would oppose it.

There is much talk about what Atlantic Canada needs. The proposer of the motion suggested full employment. Whilst full employment would be good for Atlantic Canada, I suggest that it would be good across the country. However the full employment goal will not be achieved. Regardless of how much is spent in the country or how good the opportunities are, full employment is unachievable.

The presenter of the motion also said that regional development policies and programs have been managed from the top down. That is so. ACOA is a prime example. Western Economic Diversification is another example as is FORD-Q.

For labour and communities to co-ordinate how we are to improve the economy in Atlantic Canada is a good avenue, but it is also a good avenue to pursue right across the country. Co-operatives are in existence so these things can happen if the people want them to happen. That kind of activity does not need government intervention.

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(1835)

The mover of the motion suggested the fisheries problems in Atlantic Canada were a result of government bungling. We all know that to be so on both the east coast and west coast. That is unfortunate. The less government we have in the country the better off we will be. To try to increase government is not the way to go.

The proposer of the motion also suggested that young people should not have to leave home. While that again is nice to say, the reality is that young people leave home. Young people go where there is work. Young people leave home for various reasons. To expect young people to stay in Atlantic Canada any more than they do in the towns of Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or wherever is unrealistic.

I am quite impressed with the skills of the provincial governments in Atlantic Canada. Frank McKenna in New Brunswick impressed the nation with some of his moves to get business into New Brunswick. Clyde Wells in Newfoundland is also making good innovative approaches to improve its economy. That is what really needs to happen. It is up to the people themselves. I do not think the federal government necessarily plays a big role in this activity.

One of the real potentials I see in Atlantic Canada is the cost of land and housing. For example, young people growing up in the area I come from in the lower mainland of British Columbia cannot afford to buy houses or to buy land. It is just too expensive for them. I see the day when young people will be going back to the eastern part of the country. They will look to where there are appropriate housing costs. They will look to where they can buy land, live and raise families. The potential of Atlantic Canada will be much greater in the future because of the natural evolution of the country. As a result of the younger generation moving we will see jobs being created. In areas like the lower mainland of British Columbia we will see an outflow of younger people for that reason.

Where there are successes there are failures. We only have to look at some of the activities of ACOA to see failures in the nation as far as regional development and western economic diversification are concerned. It is a presumption of government that it knows best how to spend our money.

The minister responsible for ACOA recently said that there would be no grants. A lot of that came from the pressure we put on the government. As a result we now have ACOA giving out loans that basically FBDB should be giving out. Why ACOA is not cancelled today is difficult to understand. There are institutions in the country that can look after the affairs ACOA used to look after or the new responsibilities of ACOA. We need not have that bureaucracy in existence.

I look forward to seeing what the Minister of Finance will do next Monday with the operations of ACOA, Western Economic Diversification and FORD-Q if he is truly interested in making some positive changes in the country.

Atlantic Canada needs less government, not more government.

(1840)

Owners of some businesses who receive grants, and they are the minority of businesses, will not say that. When we really get down to the people who are paying the taxes for the money going to those businesses, they are saying: "Look, we would rather have the money in our pockets. Create businesses and create wealth from our perspective. Don't give it to the friends of the recipients over there".

The hon. member for Moncton talked about infrastructure. He suggested that infrastructure was an investment and not a cost. I have the greatest of difficulty with that philosophy. The infrastructure started by the Liberal government came into place as a result of its commitment to jobs, jobs, jobs.

The Liberals said that they were going to spend \$2 billion at the federal level and \$2 billion at the provincial level if they chipped in. Also the municipalities were to throw in \$2 billion. What was not acknowledged was that there was only one taxpayer paying this money. The government took over a \$40 billion deficit, \$40 billion of overspending, and then said that it would spend some more. It was going to borrow another \$6 billion from taxpayers to start an infrastructure program to show the whole country it could create jobs.

Yes, it did. It created short term jobs. In the long run that is unhealthy for the country. It does not help at all. Only when we have a continuous infrastructure can it be of benefit to the country. We cannot have it continuously because we are borrowing too much money. We have too high a debt load.

It was patently wrong for the hon. member for Moncton to suggest that bad Reformers over here were treating Atlantic Canadians indifferently or incorrectly because they were against infrastructure. The fact is that the infrastructure is not good for taxpayers across the country regardless of what province they live in.

I trust the motion is not asking for more money. I trust it speaks to the fact that Atlantic Canadians can help themselves just like anybody else anywhere in the country. All the more credit to them.

If we want to look at ingenuity in the country we can look at Atlantic Canada where the provinces for years have had less money than many other provinces. They seem to dig down, dig deep, work hard, innovate and come up with answers that many of us across the country should be looking at and following. We should be using some of their initiative. Hats off to Premier

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Frank McKenna. He is on the right track as far as any government in the land is concerned.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing who has spent some time in his past life in my riding of Halifax.

I thank him for his motion because it is refreshing to finally hear some understanding of Atlantic Canada being expressed by members on the other side. Also, the motion serves as an important reminder to government members as well as we enter into the final days before our budget.

The motion voices the belief shared by the vast majority of Canadians and promoted by the government that there is a vibrant future for Atlantic Canada and that it has much to contribute, as it always has, to the future of the country. Government has a role to play to ensure a fairer, more equitable and just future for Atlantic Canada by encouraging policies and programs to create jobs through initiative funds for co-operatives, encouraging small business, upgrading municipal infrastructure and diversifying single industry communities.

Never before has it been so important for government to provide the encouragement and framework for economic self-reliance. Given the current fiscal situation, government is faced with doing more for Canadians with ever fewer resources. Canadians expect their government to approach economic development with a keener business sense, expecting greater returns on their investment.

This is why the motion is so important. It underscores the innovative and productive ways in which the federal government, in partnership with the provinces, the private sector, communities and most important of all the people, can kindle and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit in Atlantic Canada.

(1845)

It is also timely, coming as it does in the wake of the thinly veiled attack on Atlantic Canada by members of the Reform Party with the release of that manifesto yesterday. The Atlantic culture, its way of life, the vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, must be kindled, encouraged and recognized for what it really is: strong, proud and independent. Our national policies must reflect this reality.

Unlike the Reform Party, we cannot afford to base government policies on offensive stereotypes. The Reform Party in past comments by its MPs and in its manifesto on deficit reduction released yesterday attempts to propagate the ignorant stereotype that Atlantic Canada is a wasteland filled with dependent and enslaved welfare recipients and working stiffs

who are a drain on the national treasury and economy, and the italics are theirs.

As an Atlantic Canadian I find these gross generalizations very offensive, but then again why should I expect anything different? We hear policies on women, on the family and on race that are a testament to the fact that the Reform Party prefers ideologically driven false assumptions. Sure, if stereotypes held true the world's problems would be a lot simpler to deal with but reality constantly confirms that they are not true.

When a regionally based political party from the west recommends solutions based on untrue stereotypes of a group of people who live in another region of the country we have the makings for divisive, dangerous and destructive debate.

Those of us from the region know that nothing can be further from the truth. By perpetrating these offensive stereotypes the Reform Party is attacking the very foundation of Atlantic Canada. It is maligning the region's hard working men and women. We must recognize that the people of Atlantic Canada are the key to economic development, the people who have lived and laboured and not only survived but flourished in this region over the last half millennium and longer in the case of our aboriginal peoples.

As elected representatives we have a responsibility now more than ever to promote and protect their interests here in Ottawa; their real interests, not those imagined interests seen through the lens of destructive stereotypes.

For the Reform Party the solution to Atlantic Canada is simple. It wants a government sponsored and enforced migration program. Again, this is confirmed in the document released yesterday and in statements made by members of its caucus. They advocate that UI and other benefits be dependent on the willingness to relocate.

The Reform MP from Capilano—Howe Sound is quoted as saying people should be moving to jobs and the rest of Canada is not prepared to foot the bill for the alleged dependency in the Atlantic region.

These approaches would make government a destructive force in the lives of Atlantic Canadians as opposed to a catalyst for economic and social development.

For that reason I would like to speak today about Atlantic Canada, about the diversity of its economy, the aspirations of its people and the real future that we in Atlantic Canada are working toward.

Members of the Reform would do well to listen and perhaps, although unlikely, learn something about the region. The government has a role and I would like to provide some examples of areas where we have been successful.

We in the government recognize that the people of Atlantic Canada are the key. I can think of no greater example of community based grassroots development initiatives than those of the co-operative movement which was founded in Atlantic Canada. It is recognized as one of the region's major economic players despite its modest beginnings. Today co-operatives are involved in financial services, insurance, consumer products, manufacturing, processing, housing projects and in various worker owned co-ops.

Their strength can be summarized in a few words: knowledge of the people and the community. Their innovation is reflected in some recent senior housing developments and the introduction four years ago of a venture capital funding instrument by the *caisse populaire* movement in New Brunswick, to cite but a few.

Experience in Europe and elsewhere demonstrates the amazing potential for this type of initiative to contribute to economic development.

Approximately 750,000 people, 30 per cent of the Atlantic population, are members of or use the services of co-operatives. Five hundred thousand Atlantic Canadians are members of credit unions and *caisses populaires* which administer \$2.4 billion in assets in the region. They employ 2,000 people. Insurance co-ops have another 477 employees; consumer co-operatives, 2,400 employees. The major co-operative employer, however, is the producer co-operative, with close to 6,000 employees.

(1850)

I want to stress that a co-operative is more than a business. Its *raison d'être* is the economic and social betterment of its members and the community. The human aspect takes a central role with the co-operative movement and this is a real asset. Approximately 11,000 Atlantic Canadians are employed in this system; a major employer by any standard.

In the area of small business we have great success in Atlantic Canada. It is the engine of economic growth throughout Canada, most particularly in the Atlantic region. Small business and the growth of new business is alive and well. The rate of small business start-ups has continued to grow. The number of small businesses, those with fewer than 100 employees, grew to 83,000 from 53,000 in the ten-year period from 1981 to 1991. The number of large businesses with more than 500 employees decreased marginally. We are experiencing an unprecedented increase in the business start-up rate and job creation in Atlantic Canada.

The number one priority of this government has been robust in the maritimes with the inception of the Canada infrastructure

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works program, a program which it seems is singularly difficult for the members opposite to grasp.

As of December 31 over 575 programs have been approved in Atlantic Canada, from installing and upgrading sewer systems to rebuilding roadways. This represents investments of \$450 million and will create over 7,300 jobs in the region.

The government has made its number one priority to restore the dignity of Canadians by putting them back to work. This government received an overwhelming mandate from Canadians in every region to do just that.

The minister responsible for ACOA said recently that what is good for Atlantic Canada is good for all of Canada. I know that Reform members have difficulty with this. That is because they do not have a national vision and they do not share the Canadian belief that we must continue to work together in every region of the country toward economic and social development.

I am delighted to speak in support of this motion. I am delighted to stand in this House and explode some of the myths perpetrated about Atlantic Canadians by members on the opposite side. I am delighted to speak, in particular, about co-operatives, coming from the province of Nova Scotia, the home of Monsignor Moses Coady and Father James Tompkins, the fathers of the co-operative movement worldwide.

It is a proud thing to be an Atlantic Canadian. It is a great thing to be an Atlantic Canadian standing in this House representing other Atlantic Canadians. I invite members on the other side who do not seem to understand that pride, that heritage, that culture and that future to come see us. We will show you where the real world is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated as a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped from the Order Paper pursuant to Standing Order 96.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

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

DAIRY FARMERS

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the United States is getting ready to encroach on an area and our farmers are not at all happy about it. In Quebec, farmers know what supply management means.

In December 1993, I participated in an information session put on by the UPA in Beauce. The meeting was held in Saint-Georges. We were told, with input by Yvon Proulx, senior economist at the UPA, that, under the GATT, we were going to

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have to drop milk quotas, which would be replaced by import tariffs. These import tariffs would be so high that they would prevent, to all intents and purposes, the entry of supply management commodities, such as dairy products, eggs and poultry.

(1855)

Both the farmers and I were sceptical, but the UPA kept on repeating that the freshly elected Liberal government had given guarantees.

However, Canada and the United States each have their own interpretation of the FTA and NAFTA. On the one hand, we have Canada, which claims that converting import quotas for dairy products into tariff equivalents, as the GATT agreements stipulate, takes precedence. On the other, we have our American friends, who claim that NAFTA prohibits the use of tariff equivalents.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister assured me “from one Chrétien to another” that he would bring the issue before a WTO panel if the Americans did not stop pestering Quebecers and Canadians. Today, I would like to remind the government that, under the GATT agreement, Canada’s agricultural tariffs for each commodity will be reduced by 36 per cent over six years, with a minimum reduction of 15 per cent per commodity. That is what was promised to farmers in order to let the GATT be passed, in December 1993.

By July 1995, therefore in a few months, the tariffs should be as follows, to quote a few: butter, 351 per cent; cheese, 290 per cent; powdered milk, 250 per cent; chicken, 280 per cent; eggs, which have the lowest tariff, 192 per cent; milk, 283 per cent and ice cream, 326 per cent.

These high tariffs will protect producers in Quebec and Canada for several years to come, despite tariff reductions of 15 per cent to 36 per cent over the next six years.

The important thing for our farmers is not to produce but to secure markets for their products. That is why this government must stand up and show once and for all that, under section 309 of NAFTA, Canada can invoke section XI of the GATT agreement to protect its agricultural industry. I hope that this government will show more backbone than it did in the durum wheat dispute last summer.

Supply management is nothing new in Canada. In fact, dairy products have been supply managed since 1972. There were then 17 cows in the average dairy herd, compared with 48 today.

We must remember that, in 1971 and before, farmers had a little bit of everything. They used to keep three or four pigs, one or two horses, beef and dairy cows, sheep, chickens; it was almost a zoo.

Today, our farmers specialize in pork, dairy, poultry and other products. We asked our farmers to specialize in order to become

competitive and they took up the challenge. To meet this challenge, they must have a decent income and know how much they can expect to receive in 1995 and 1996, and not a widely fluctuating income. Supply management offers dairy producers some income stability.

(1900)

I know that my question will be answered by the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings on behalf of the Prime Minister, but I hope that he will take these demands under consideration. I know that the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings is very familiar with all agricultural sectors and that he, too, is very sensitive to farmers’ concerns. I, for one, can tell you that farmers would never have agreed, in December 1993, had they known that this import tariff agreement would be so fragile.

[English]

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments tonight. I can assure him that we heard what he has said. We heard what his representatives have said and we heard what the supply management industry has said.

Yesterday the hon. member asked the Prime Minister whether he plans on telling President Clinton that Canada has no intention of negotiating bilaterally any reduction in the tariff equivalents that were negotiated in the Uruguay round and then implemented by Canada.

As the Prime Minister stated very clearly in his response to the member, our application of tariff equivalents on supply managed commodities that were negotiated in the Uruguay round is fully consistent with our rights under both GATT and NAFTA.

We are satisfied that our legal position is sound and we will continue to hold firm on our position. This message will be conveyed to President Clinton by the Prime Minister during President Clinton’s visit to Canada and to this House to speak tomorrow. The Prime Minister, as we know, will be meeting with President Clinton for the next two days.

During the FTA, NAFTA and multilateral trade negotiations, Canada’s position was that we would not make any concessions that would undermine supply management. This position is reflected in all those agreements.

Tariffication was a central issue during the Uruguay round. It was clear that these tariff equivalents would apply to all imports, including those from the United States.

The United States has requested consultation and it should be seen as just that; a request to meet and discuss the issues. It is the first step in the dispute settlement process. If the United States so desires, it may eventually seek to resolve the issue by way of a panel under either NAFTA or the WTO or as it is otherwise

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known, GATT. This, however, does not preclude Canada from requesting a panel in either NAFTA or the WTO, if we so desire.

I would like to point out again to the member that the Prime Minister met with the representatives of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, including representatives from supply management agencies, and including the president of the UPA who was present at that meeting on Monday of this week.

He indicated very clearly that Canada has a strong, legal case and that Canada would ardently defend its rights regarding the tariffication of import measures on supply managed commodities.

JUSTICE

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to expand on my question today to the Minister of Justice on family violence.

When I talk about family violence I am not talking only about violence against women. I am talking about violence against the elderly, violence against the handicapped, violence against children, and yes, sometimes violence against men. I am not talking only about physical abuse or physical violence. I am talking about mental abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and sometimes financial abuse in terms of dependency.

I have held two forums on family violence in my riding. They were attended by about 80 presenters from all walks of life, such as from the mental health field, family law, crown attorneys, police chiefs, counsellors, educators, and victims of violence.

One thing that came through very loud and clear from the forums is that there is definitely a lack of awareness in our society on family violence. There was consensus that as a government we have to do something to make Canadians aware of the gravity and the prevalence of violence in our society.

(1905)

A lot of questions were asked. For instance, when there is a family violence situation, why do we remove the victims and the children and put them in a shelter and the abuser or offender is free?

I believe, as was the consensus during the forums, that there is a real need to conduct some national forums on family violence. The purpose of those forums would be to create awareness. In my next householder I intend to give numbers to assist people in knowing where to find help. A lot of victims do not know where to turn, especially in the rural areas of Canada.

During the course of my forums the media: radio, television and newspapers talked about them. Many victims came out of the woodwork to seek help. If we can create awareness by the forums, we will have achieved at least part of our goal.

The second goal of having such forums would be to develop, in consultation with all parties involved, a set of recommendations. What changes can we make to the Criminal Code to prevent family violence? What changes can we make to the administration of justice? What support programs can we implement, not only for the victims of family violence but also for the offenders?

I can already hear members of the Reform Party saying that this is going to cost money. These forums can be organized in a very cost effective manner. All we actually need are two co-chairs, preferably a man and a woman, a support staff from the justice department and perhaps from the minister for the status of women. We could ask members in each riding to look after the logistics of organizing the forums, to advertise and to find a venue.

We would need only a very small travelling budget for three or four persons and maybe have 20 or 25 of those forums across the country. A small amount of money like that would be well spent in protecting our children, our elderly and the lives of women in this country.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice shares the hon. member's concern and commitment to addressing the serious problem of family violence.

Recent examples of the justice minister's commitment include Bill C-42 which was proclaimed on February 15, 1995 and amended the Criminal Code peace bond provisions to help prevent acts of family violence before they occur. These amendments will allow police and others to apply on behalf of persons at risk of harm for a peace bond. They will also enable the court to specify the conditions that can be imposed as part of the peace bond including, for example, prohibiting the husband from being at or near the family home or from communicating with his wife.

These amendments also make the breach of a peace bond more serious by making it punishable on indictment and liable to imprisonment for a maximum term of two years instead of the previous summary conviction maximum of six months.

Another example is Bill C-41 introduced on June 13, 1994 which proposes sentencing reforms and would make the abuse of a position of trust or authority in the commission of an offence an aggravating factor in sentencing.

On February 14, 1995 the Minister of Justice tabled Bill C-68 which proposes significant reforms to control firearms. We know for instance from the Statistics Canada spousal homicide survey that between 1974 and 1992 a married woman was nine times as likely to be killed by her spouse as by a stranger and that 42 per cent of women killed by their spouses during this period

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were killed with guns. These firearms' proposals will provide a clear and effective response to prevent such use of firearms.

The Minister of Justice also acknowledges the importance and value of consulting with Canadians. Public consultations provide the government with invaluable insight into various issues.

A recent example of the value of such consultations is the June 1994 national consultation with women's organizations on violence against women issues which included family violence. This national consultation was co-hosted by the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for the Status of Women.

These existing efforts to address family violence by the federal government will help to protect women, children and seniors who are the primary victims of family violence. The individual efforts of members such as the hon. member's public forums will clearly contribute to the national capacity to better understand and respond to family violence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, pursuant to order made Thursday, February 16, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 24 at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 7.11 p.m.)

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