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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 8, 1995

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

V-E DAY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for over a year now, Canadians have been planning to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the events that led to the end of the second world war. Hundreds of commemorative activities have already been held in various communities across Canada. Through ceremonies, concerts, exhibitions and storytelling, Canadians are paying tribute to those who gave their lives to overcome tyranny.

There are no words to express the pride I feel toward my country, a country that was effectively created by the men and women who fought for our freedom. It is because of both those who did not come back and those who are still among us, along with the thousands of Canadians who supported their efforts, that we now enjoy a quality of life and freedoms without parallel. Today I want to thank and honour them.

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PRESIDENT OF FRENCH REPUBLIC

Mr. Yves Rochelleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois wishes to salute the election of the Mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, as President of the French Republic. During his seven-year mandate, Mr. Chirac, a man of vast experience, will probably have to face the major challenges that await France as the next millennium approaches. When Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau visited France in January, the new French president said that if Quebecers decided in favour of sovereignty, France would no doubt be among the first to say that it would accompany them along that road.

For his part, the Prime Minister of Canada implied a few months ago that Jacques Chirac had as little chance of winning the presidential election as the sovereignists had of winning

their referendum. Again, history is waiting for our Prime Minister just around the corner.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Nursing Week. As a nurse, I realize the important role nurses fulfil in our health care system and the many challenges they face daily.

Nurses face the seemingly never ending challenge of providing more services at higher standards with less funding. This is the result of a combination of today's fiscal constraints, rising health costs, public expectation, and the expanding role of health services.

Changes in the role nurses play have great potential to improve cost effectiveness in our health care system. For instance, in many cases nurses can provide the necessary education, guidance, and care without the patient having to visit or revisit a physician.

Our health care is too important an issue to be left only to politicians. Health care debates and decisions must involve all major players, and nurses are ideally positioned. I ask all members in the House to join me in saluting all of Canada's nurses today.

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WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that May 8 is World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. This day is meant to celebrate international understanding and promote the humanitarian cause of the Red Cross Society of Canada.

This year's theme is dignity for all and respect for women. World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day acknowledges the millions of people suffering from the consequences of war due to ethnic and other violence, natural disasters, and malnutrition. It appeals to people all over the world to respect the dignity of those most in need. For nearly 100 years, the Canadian Red Cross Society has maintained a Canadian tradition of providing humanitarian assistance whenever and wherever it is needed. Often the Red Cross is the only organization allowed to bring assistance to war zones.

S. O. 31

Please join me in congratulating the many volunteers of the Red Cross Society for their selfless efforts and understanding work and in wishing them a very successful Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

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[*Translation*]

V-E DAY

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this 50th anniversary of V-E Day in Europe, we will recall that although far from the battle, all of America was deeply concerned about the events taking place in Europe. While thousands of Quebecers and Canadians were fighting abroad, thousands of others contributed to the war effort on the home front.

I am referring in particular to all those women who provided support to the combatants. I am thinking about the nurses, the women who worked on farms and in factories and those who produced war materials. To all those women who, through their courage and hard work, contributed to the war effort, we are expressing today our most sincere admiration and deepest gratitude.

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[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Reform Party MPs have given thumbs up to the first piece of legislation in Canadian history to actively keep government honest and accountable to Canadians.

The taxpayer protection act is a chance for governments to show Canadians that government can be responsible with tax dollars while giving Canadians an opportunity to have a direct say on how much money they can afford to pay.

The taxpayer protection act would require deficit control and reduction. It would limit expenditure increases to the rate of growth in the economy or population growth. It would also keep tax increases in check in the same way. The taxpayer protection act would not say how the money is to be spent but how much money is to be spent.

The Liberals are famous for stealing good political ideas before, during and even between elections. I therefore challenge the Liberals to embrace this Reform idea, a federal taxpayer protection act, and show Canadians that even they can be truly responsible and accountable.

V-E DAY

Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on this 50th anniversary of V-E Day to pay tribute to the Canadians who helped bring about the end of the second world war.

(1405)

During the war thousands of men and women from the Dominion of Newfoundland proudly served with the allied armies, navies, and air forces. Thousands of others served with the merchant navy, risking their lives to keep the vital shipping lines across the Atlantic open.

Members of the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit worked in Britain to ensure the continuing supply of lumber, while many others joined the British Home Guard.

At home, people felt the reality of this war as well. In the fall of 1942 four allied ships were sunk by U-boats off Bell Island of Newfoundland, the only community in North America to come under direct enemy fire. Sixty-nine men were killed and a memorial now stands in Lance Cove in their honour.

As Mr. Churchill said 50 years ago, "Today is V-E Day; long live the cause of peace".

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V-E DAY

Mr. John English (Kitchener, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 1940s young men and women left Canada's farms and factories, villages and cities to fight a war that had to be fought. They were young men and women like Earl Grummett, who fought from D-Day's beaches to Holland along the Maple Leaf route; like Stanley Kudoba, who spent the war's last hours fighting the enemy in a small Dutch village; or like Lottie Kosiorek, who was freed from a forced labour camp.

Today we celebrate those who triumphed over Nazism and fascism 50 years ago. How thrilling it was for us to hear the Dutch Prime Minister say on Saturday, "Thank you, Canadians, from the bottoms of our hearts".

These men and women were the glory of their times. Let us honour them today in our times for the great deeds they did for all of us.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL FOREST WEEK

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to mark National Forest Week, I would like to acknowledge the great contribution made by the federal government and

all other participants to the model forest program. This program has gone a long way toward integrating principles of sustainable forestry into logging operations in Canada.

[English]

The model forest program has in just three years firmly established a nationwide network of ten large-scale model forest partnerships. The worldwide notoriety of this project has helped to place Canada in a leadership role in forest management.

These partnerships are comprised of willing and committed individuals, encompassing a broad spectrum of our society, including academics, students, traditional and non-traditional forest-based industries, foresters, and First Nations groups.

[Translation]

I wish to congratulate all the dedicated people working together for the sustainable development of Canadian forest resources.

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[English]

NATIONAL MINING WEEK

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the government and the hon. Minister of Natural Resources in particular for establishing National Mining Week.

This is a timely recognition of mining's importance to Canada and to regions of the country such as northern Ontario.

[Translation]

In Ontario, with 56 mines and 103 quarries, the mining sector contributed \$4.9 billion to the economy last year. There are 300 companies providing mines with services and equipment.

[English]

The mining industry is a high-tech industry, very much part of our new economy. It is developing technologies for robotics and process control and anti-pollution systems. In addition, the mining industry has invested heavily in training and boasts a highly skilled workforce.

Ontario's mines have played and continue to play a leading role in developing these technologies. In areas like northern Ontario, mining is an integral part of our heritage. Mining is also an essential part of our present and our future.

I look forward to National Mining Week as an annual celebration to raise the profile of mining among all Canadians.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

V-E DAY

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as an Allied force veteran, it is with emotion that I share in this pride we are all feeling today on this 50th anniversary of the Allied victory in Europe.

On this occasion, let us remember that more than one million Quebecers and Canadians joined the armed forces during the second world war and made a major contribution to the liberation of Europe, notably Belgium, where I was born, from its oppressor. And more than 42,000 of them lost their lives in the process.

I want to draw attention to the courage of the Quebec service members who fought in the Netherlands, among other places, where many distinguished themselves. We thank all those Quebecers and Canadians who served at the front, were killed at sea, on land and in the air or risked their lives to overcome tyranny.

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(1410)

[English]

NATIONAL FORESTRY WEEK

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the start of National Forestry Week.

Forestry was a major force involved in the founding of many of the communities within my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan and continues to be a vital economic activity throughout the riding today. At the same time, the people of Nanaimo—Cowichan have a great respect and appreciation for not only the revenue but also the beauty provided by the forests. We realize the importance of striking a balance between the environment and the economy.

To help celebrate National Forestry Week, a constituent of mine, Mr. Ed McDonald, a forestry technician with 40 years experience, has graciously donated western cedar seedlings to each member of the House of Commons. On behalf of Mr. McDonald, I invite all MPs to pick up a beautiful B.C. seedling from the antechamber. In planting these cedars, I hope all members will become more aware of the value of our forests in both environmental and economic terms.

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RAIL

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems to be only those countries with declining economic prospects that are forced to get rid of their national railways. Mexico,

S. O. 31

buffeted by the currency traders, is offering its national railway to outside investors. Canada is doing the same.

Yet the American government continues to pour money into its rail and port system. One recent example is \$1.6 billion to improve rail and terminal facilities in Long Beach, California, to “enhance export capabilities”.

The Netherlands Parliament has just approved an expenditure of almost \$6 billion for a 75-mile link to connect Germany’s Ruhr industrial belt to Rotterdam.

If the Liberals could see what the Dutch and the Americans see, that trade and transport are intertwined, we would be investing to aid our exporters instead of giving up on the CNR and selling it out.

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BILL C-41

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the 1993 violence against women survey by Statistics Canada, 29 per cent of women, or 2.7 million women, who have ever been married or lived in a common law relationship have been physically or sexually assaulted by their partners. Forty-four per cent of the cases involved a weapon and 45 per cent resulted in physical injury.

We are all painfully aware of the seriousness of the problem and the negative consequences not only to those involved but to society as a whole. In fact we may have been so overwhelmed by the tragic statistics and pleas for help over so many years that I fear we may have become desensitized to the severity of the problem.

I call to the attention of the House Motion No. 15 to Bill C-41, which would assist in addressing this most serious problem. I ask all members to seriously consider this motion as our opportunity to send a clear and tough message to spouse abusers.

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V-E DAY

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that Edmund Burke said that all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men or women to do nothing.

Fifty years ago today one million Canadians took up the charge to fight the evil. I was reminded of this yesterday at a church service of the Branch 6 Legion, which had three Victoria Cross members. They were Billy Bishop, Tommy Holmes, and David Currie. David Currie was a second world war veteran who risked his life to defend a group of tanks in the army in 1944.

I would like to thank all Canadians and in particular the Grey and Simcoe Foresters and Branch 6 for their help during the war.

I would like to thank their families as well for what they put up with in order to ensure that we have the democracy we have today.

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[Translation]

V-E DAY

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we mark today the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Europe and the end of the second world war.

Thousands of Canadians took part in this conflict from which many never returned. Today, we pay tribute to these soldiers for their courage and their bravery. May 8, 1945, is the day that freedom triumphed over oppression and tyranny.

I hope that that day and all of the sacrifices that made it possible remain deeply etched in our memories so that this tragedy will be the last of its kind.

* * *

(1415)

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the health care system in this country is now in serious crisis; five-month waits for heart surgery, thirteen-month waits for hip replacement, and increasing numbers of bed closures are now commonplace.

Every year tens of thousands of Canadians are shocked into reality when they find out timely and accessible health care is not available to them. The primary reason for this is there is not enough money to pay for the demands on our health care system.

The time for solutions is now, otherwise we will see the demise of publicly funded health care in Canada. Therefore we must define essential health care services and ensure that all Canadians are covered regardless of their financial status. We must amend the Canada Health Act to allow the provinces to work with different funding models. We must also ensure federal funds given to the provinces go to health care and are not siphoned off into other programs.

We must be innovative to work to ensure that high quality, accessible health care is available to all Canadians.

The Speaker: Before we proceed to question period there is a point of order which I will permit from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to proceed immediately with statements by ministers. Following the minister’s statement and the two normal responses from each party in opposition, I think you will also find

a disposition on the part of the House to permit the hon. member for Kamloops to say a few words.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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V-E DAY

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to rise this afternoon in this place of piece to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe.

On May 8, 1945, before some of us were born, Canadians old and young paraded in the streets, gathered on Parliament Hill, lit victory bonfires; church bells rang and children shouted in joy. The second world war was over in Europe and loved ones would soon be coming home.

With the news that the great war was over so too was the worry that a father or a son, a sister or a friend would not live to see and feel the peace for which they had fought and for which so many had died.

In the homes of Canada the sounds of victory that bellowed from Europe echoed like a profound sigh of relief.

[Translation]

And for those who had lost a loved one in the war, there was at least the consolation that others would not have to suffer from the same pain that gripped them, and that the war would no longer make young widows out of young brides.

Today, thousands of Canadian veterans are commemorating this anniversary in a very special way: They returned to Europe's battlefields of 50 years past. They returned to say their goodbyes to friends who are dead but not forgotten. Several of them returned to Holland, a grateful country which warmly welcomed them. They were greeted as liberators. They were showered with the same love and exuberance that they received in the spring of 1945.

[English]

Today, as they did 50 years ago, the Dutch people are welcoming Canadians into their homes and hearts. They are showing the gratitude that a people have for their liberators; the gratitude of a people who know what freedom is because they had it taken away. It is the gratitude that a people have for the soldiers, some of whom are in the gallery today, who ended their starvation and who fought a desperate battle against a vicious enemy. It is the gratitude for the young Canadian soldier far away from home who fought beside a brother at one moment and then in a burst of fire became a memory the next. It is the

gratitude for those young Canadians who fought through the cold and the mud, through the rain and the blood, through the pain, until the people of Holland found their liberation and Europe found its victory.

Ik bedank het nederlandse volk for de gast vrijheid.

The battle in Holland was not a battle for conquest; it was a battle for freedom. It was battle that cost the lives of 7,000 young Canadians who lie buried in the peace they won.

Canada paid a great price for that peace. It is a price we measure each time a veteran sees a small Dutch child, as we saw today near Parliament Hill. It is the price of making the world safe and decent for all our children. It is the price our country was willing to pay.

(1420)

[Translation]

This morning, the MPs of this House attended ceremonies to honour the sacrifice of those who served Canada in those six years of conflict. We gathered at the War Memorial to pay tribute to those who gave their lives for freedom and to honour the peace we inherited from them.

In his eloquent speech at the Groesbeek cemetery in Holland on Saturday, the Prime Minister said: "You made it possible for us to live, grow and prosper in peace. Your legacy is a proud and independent country which grew from infancy to adulthood during the war".

[English]

On this day, the 50th anniversary of V-E Day, we oblige ourselves to preserve this legacy for all the days to come. We oblige ourselves to keep this vigil of peace constant from parent to child, from teacher to student, from generation to generation.

We pay tribute to their great sacrifices and to the ideals that inspired those sacrifices. Canadians fought and died on the fields of Europe to preserve the democratic ideals that make Canada the envy of the world.

Today we stand proud on the world stage because 50 years ago our veterans dug in and told the enemy: "We are the Canadians. We are the bitter enemy of your oppression. We will not rest until your tyranny has ended. We will not rest until we share our freedom with the world".

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, exactly 50 years ago the war ended in Europe and the end of the world conflict, which came on August 15, 1945 with the surrender of Japan, seemed imminent.

Today we celebrate the triumph of freedom and democracy. But we also commemorate the sacrifices made by those to whom we owe this victory and this legacy of freedom and democracy.

S. O. 31

The road to victory was a long and arduous one. From Italy to France, from Belgium to the Netherlands, tens of thousands of our soldiers gave their lives to liberate Europe from its oppressors.

[*English*]

Today we want to thank them, all those who served on the front, the sailors and airmen from every part of Canada, the merchant seamen, the nurses, all the men and women who risked or lost their lives in order to defeat tyranny.

We must never forget that more than a million of our fellow citizens enlisted in the Canadian forces during the second world war; 100,000 were wounded and more than 45,000 made the ultimate sacrifice.

Although far from the conflict, the whole of the American continent was profoundly touched by the war that had inflamed Europe. As thousands of young people left for the front, thousands of other citizens contributed to the war effort on the home front in the factories, on the farms and in the militia.

[*Translation*]

I would like to recall the particularly heroic role played by thousands of soldiers from Quebec who fought in the Netherlands, side by side with their fellow citizens from other Canadian provinces. There was the Régiment de Maisonneuve, the Fusiliers Mont-Royal, the Royal 22e Régiment and the Régiment de la Chaudière.

The extent of human loss and the horror of the suffering inflicted on nations during this endless war are beyond belief. The figures themselves which refer to thousands of dead are shocking but fall far short of expressing the grim facts. For instance, they do not reflect the horror of the concentration camps and the genocide of the Jews.

And at home, who can adequately describe the sorrow of mothers and fathers who lost a son in the flower of his youth? What can we say to widows and orphans, brothers and sisters, bereft of a loved one who went overseas and met a hero's fate on the battlefield? The most eloquent and authentic memorial to those who died is the silence that prevails among the little crosses that mark the grassy graves, row on row, in cemeteries spread over Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

These people went into battle and these lives were sacrificed so there would be no more wars and so future generations would be spared this horror and suffering. Unfortunately, many bloody conflicts are raging throughout the world.

(1425)

And now, consider those who have accepted the responsibility for maintaining peace in the world. I am thinking of the UN peacekeeping force and especially our Canadian soldiers now on peacekeeping missions. Every day they witness acts of atrocity against civilian populations.

The ceremonies being held today hold out some hope that the world will remember the horrors of the second world war and learn the lessons it teaches us.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to thank those who died and those who survived this monstrous tragedy. Let us honour their memory.

[*English*]

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the victory in Europe, V-E Day, let us give meaning and commitment to our promise to remember.

Let us truly remember the people involved, in particular our service people, our merchant seamen, the men and women of ferry command and civilians overseas. Let us truly remember also those who served in Canada, including the families of those overseas.

Let us truly remember those who were killed or wounded in action. Let us remember what Stan Waters, a former commander of the Canadian Armed Forces, once told us, that there are no hyphenated Canadians in the graveyards of Europe; just Canadians period.

[*Translation*]

Let us remember those who were wounded and those who lost their life. We must not forget Stan Waters, a former commander in the Canadian Armed Forces, who once told us: "There are no hyphenated Canadians in the graveyards of Europe, just Canadians period".

[*English*]

Let us truly remember the millions who died in the Holocaust and the millions of civilians who were killed during the war around the world and let us truly remember and honour those who made it safely through to V-E Day, many of whom are still with us.

Let us truly remember that the struggle for freedom, liberty and democracy is never over. It goes on all over the world, including here in Canada. It is not a struggle to be taken for granted.

This principle is captured in the motto of the supreme headquarters of the allied powers in Europe: "Vigilance is the price of liberty". This principle can be captured here in Canada without a motto by declaring that if we value freedom and democracy we must work at retaining or improving it every day of our lives.

Let us celebrate the anniversary of V-E Day by truly remembering the price of freedom was not just paid in the past. Let us honour the sacrifices of the past by discharging with meaning and commitment our ongoing obligations to the preservation and improvement of democracy today.

Oral Questions

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. Some 500,000 Canadian veterans of World War II are still with us today to rejoice in the V-E Day celebrations. They, along with their families, friends and all who supported them, are very special people, for they serve to demonstrate that good can triumph over evil. They left home and country and travelled to foreign lands and seas to combat tyranny and oppression.

Today we pay tribute to their great sacrifices and to those ideals of peace, freedom and democracy that inspired those sacrifices.

While tens of thousands commemorate the anniversary throughout Canada via a number of venues, many vets have returned to Europe to revisit old battle sites, to tell a new generation about the horrors of war, to reacquaint themselves with old friends and make new friends; especially to remember their fallen but not forgotten comrades, the 45,000 who paid the ultimate price so that we may know a legacy of peace and freedom today.

In the *Glen*, the regimental newspaper of the Calgary Highlanders, is published a short poem with the heading "The War in Europe is Over!" It reads:

We came from all walks of life from coast to coast
 Making one of the finest fighting forces in the world
 Yes, unity was achieved and victory was the result
 Soon we expect to go home and back to a normal life
 Let us not forget
 Let us not allow ourselves to fall for lies or propaganda
 Which will have French-speaking Canadians against
 English-speaking Canadians, Jews against Catholics
 And Protestants against Catholics
 East against west
 We must go back and maintain our unity achieved through
 Sweat and blood
 We won a great victory for mankind
 Above all we must remember those comrades of ours who gave
 Their lives fighting to make a world which will know no war
 And in which there will be real happiness for all
 Let us go back together as Canadians to make Canada
 A happy place for all
 We must not fail

(1430)

For all who cherish freedom today, remember to thank a veteran.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

JOB CREATION

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Statistics Canada reported a decline in the unemployment rates for Canada and Quebec. There is,

however, a sad truth behind its report, since the decline can be explained, not by an increase in the number of jobs, but by the departure of 38,000 people from the labour market. If the level of unemployment is dropping, it is because the unemployed are giving up trying to break into the job market and are abandoning all new efforts.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. With the lack of job creation measures and with cuts of more than \$6 billion to unemployment insurance, does the minister realize that the sole effect of his government's action in the past 18 months is to hide the actual number of unemployed, rather than reduce unemployment?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that over the past year Canada has seen the highest level of job growth of any of the 22 countries of the OECD. There have been 461,000 jobs created in this country. It is the best job growth number.

That is not enough and we want to continue. Much of that has been as a result of the government providing the major stimulus. We can see over 100,000 of those jobs attributed directly to the infrastructure program, which was a major election commitment we made. We have provided stimulus right across Canada. Thirty thousand Canadians alone have been affected by new employment and new opportunities through our strategic initiatives and a number of other areas.

We certainly are not saying it is sufficient, but it is on the right track. All that is lacking is the full dedication of all members of this House to the crucial issue of job creation rather than spending their time on other issues which are not as relevant to the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister talks enthusiastically of job creation, but he is forgetting to mention that no jobs have been created in Canada in the past five months.

Instead of focussing on creative measures, talking about regional development and committing to defence industry conversion, will the minister acknowledge that all he is doing at the moment is considering a project that would reduce the number of Canada employment centres from 100 to 30, as proposed in a document produced recently by his department?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. gentleman would want to apologize for the absurd statement he just made that not one job has been created in the past five months. Several thousand jobs have been created in the hon. gentleman's own riding.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government always quotes statistics for a full year. I would ask him to check his figures for the past five months.

Since the federal government has shown it is incapable of fighting unemployment creatively, and since the problem has taken on such proportions, particularly in Quebec, where we have over 800,000 people on welfare now, how does the Minister of Human Resources Development explain the federal government's stubborn refusal to give the Government of Quebec jurisdiction in matters of manpower training, when it alone can establish the appropriate and integrated measures that will really create jobs?

(1435)

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the claim made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is interesting. Only a few weeks ago the minister for manpower in the province of Quebec admitted that the SQDM itself was not up to doing the job and is now subject to a major review.

The hon. member is suggesting that we transfer the large network of investments we have provided in this country over the past 50 years to help Canadians get back to work to an organization which itself is subject to review by its own provincial government. I do not think that is a good investment. I do not think the people of Quebec would like to see us provide that major rupture in the opportunity to provide for the chance of Quebecers and Canadians to get jobs.

What would be far more appropriate is if the hon. Leader of the Opposition and his counterparts made a real dedication today to start working with us in a co-operative partnership. We could combine all our efforts and all our resources for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Last Friday, the governor of the Bank of Canada, Mr. Gordon Thiessen, confirmed to the finance committee that the bank's current monetary policy is similar in every respect to the one pursued by his predecessor. In fact, the governor referred to the continuity of the bank's policy.

Does the Minister of Finance confirm the governor's comments that the Bank of Canada's current monetary policy is similar to the one which was in effect under the previous government?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I already said a number of times in this House that we disagreed with the Bank of Canada's policy during the last recession, when interest rates were going up. But, we certainly agree today with the bank's policy, given the current objective of having and maintaining a low inflation level, and given the high price paid to achieve that goal.

It is in the interest of the Bloc Québécois and everyone else to keep inflation low, because this is a major asset for job creation.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that, if we are not careful, we could, as mentioned in the most recent report of the Bank of Canada's governor, recreate the situation which prevailed in 1990, when Canada was the first country to go into a recession, before the United States, before Europe, before the rest of the world, because of a policy of excessively high interest rates? The governor of the Bank of Canada confirmed that last week. We are doing exactly the same thing again.

How does the Minister of Finance explain that the Bank of Canada's policy remained the same under his government, particularly in light of the fact that there are 800,000 fewer jobs than in 1990, and also considering that, before he took over the finance portfolio, he felt that this policy had a devastating effect on economic growth and job creation? There are 800,000 jobs gone.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must first tell us if he wants to keep inflation down, if he accepts the one to three per cent bracket. If he does not accept it, then let us have a debate on the issue. If he does accept it, I am sure he will agree that we must anticipate inflation.

In any case, I find the hon. member's question somewhat puzzling, given that, in the last month, interest rates have gone down at least four times. There is a very distinct downward trend. I do not understand the timing of the hon. member's question.

[English]

The member, following on the Leader of the Opposition, talks about job creation. The Minister of Human Resources Development pointed out very clearly that the numbers upon which the Bloc Québécois is relying are simply not correct and that in fact there is job creation. Simply to fill in the answer given by my colleague, in the last quarter alone there have been 100,000 new jobs created in the private sector. The other side ought to know that.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at one point in time the policy of the government

Oral Questions

respecting direct to home satellite communications was to restrict access to a Canadian owned and operated company. Two weeks ago the federal cabinet overturned that CRTC decision.

(1440)

The Minister of Industry said the cabinet did so because it favoured more competition and that any links to Power Corp., a direct beneficiary of the decision, were merely coincidental. However, the government also abandoned its own time line for implementing that decision and adopted Power Corp.'s recommendations in that regard as outlined in a memo to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

How does the Deputy Prime Minister explain the fact that Power Corp., a Liberal connected firm, so completely influenced the content and the timing of a cabinet decision in which it had a direct interest?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been previously debated very fully in the House, a cabinet decision was made by the Government of Canada to protect competition and to protect Canadian consumers. I am sorry the leader of the third party is not interested in the view of the Canadian consumers who have overwhelmingly supported the decision that we have taken to review the licensing procedures which were set out rather discriminatorily by the CRTC.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the issue is not competition. The issue is insider influence and potential conflict of interest.

Power Corp. told the government to abandon its original time line and cabinet threw out the original time line. Power Corp. told the government not to alter the DTH policy panel's report and the government did not change the panel report. Power Corp. instructed the government to seek CRTC support for the changes and the government dutifully trotted off to see if it could get CRTC's support. It looks like cabinet did everything Power Corp. asked for and then some.

Why was Power Corp., a major player in the direct to home satellite business, allowed to set government time lines and policy in these matters?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party says that this issue is not about competition or consumer choice. It is exactly about consumer choice and competition.

That is why the Consumers' Association of Canada in a letter to the government on April 19 pointed out very specifically it was very concerned that preference may be given to one Canadian direct to home company over another. It said that what was even more disconcerting was that there may be an attempt to

mothball this technology until a time when cable companies and telephone codes have overcome any technological edge. CAC believes the recommendations of the policy review panel argument address the issue of cultural protection in a fair and practical manner. The letter states: "I realize my language is strong, however it reflects the general frustration felt by many consumers".

This government decision was about protecting Canadian consumers and offering choice in television viewing, something the hon. member should understand is an important part of Canadian cultural policy.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister reads briefing notes to answer a question I did not ask.

What we object to is not competition in the industry. What we object to is the process of policy making and its susceptibility to influence by the Liberal family compact. The Canadian owned Expressvu has well established ties with the CRTC. Power DirecTv is part of the Liberal family compact as well. It is time to clear the air.

What changes is the government proposing to the broadcast licensing process to ensure that policy making is open, transparent and free from undue insider influence?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the leader of the third party who seems more interested in protecting a particular interest, we have an interest in ensuring full competition, transparency and protecting the Canadian consumers. That is why we have brought the issue to the most open and democratic forum in the country, the Parliament of Canada. That is where the issue will be decided.

If the member has a charge to make, he should make the charge. If the member believes in fair and open competition and consumer choice in the emerging satellite television industry, then why does he not join us in debating, discussing and reforming these issues on the floor of the House, which is exactly what we have proposed?

* * *

[Translation]

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

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

Last Monday, the Minister of National Defence announced that the government had approved the Canadian Forces plan to almost triple the number of low level flights over Labrador and northern Quebec.

Oral Questions

(1445)

Yet, the environmental assessment panel reviewing the issue had recognized the obvious need for monitoring studies and other efforts to identify any negative effect to the extent possible.

Will the Minister of the Environment admit that the decision made by her colleague, the Minister of National Defence, is environmentally risky and flies in the face of prevention and sustainable development?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the federal government's decision to increase the number of low level flights follows a recommendation by the Quebec Premier's spokesman on native issues, Mr. Cliche, who said in the April 6, 1995 edition of *Le Devoir*, and I quote: "It remains to be demonstrated whether or not the impact is acceptable to the population. That is why a research institute must be created". That was the recommendation of the Quebec Premier's spokesman, and we followed it.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that the minister did not follow this matter very closely. In fact, many representations were made by aboriginal people complaining about the effect of low level flights on the environment and their quality of life.

Does the Minister of the Environment undertake to include in future agreements with Canada's allies a clause providing for the cancellation of contracts as soon as the environment and the local populations start feeling the negative impact of these flights?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the first question, I tried to emphasize that representations for the creation of a research institute were made by the Quebec Premier's spokesman, among others. We therefore decided to establish the institute in question.

As far as I know, Mr. Cliche is the Quebec Premier's spokesman on native issues. We are now working with the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Indian Affairs to ensure that the institute to be put in place by September will be responsible for reviewing other issues besides the environment.

We know that the studies conducted over eight years did not show an environmental impact. Obviously, the decision on where the flights will take place will be made by this new institute we are creating in collaboration with the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Indian Affairs.

[English]

ATLANTIC GROUND FISH STRATEGY

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, to become a recipient under the Atlantic groundfish strategy program one must prove "an historical attachment to the groundfishery" but not need.

It was reported this flaw allowed Prince Edward Island's snow crab fishermen to make \$200,000 last summer, then only five weeks later collect \$340 per week under the TAGS program. Why? Because they once had an historical attachment to the groundfish industry.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development amend his disastrous social program experiment so that need is the primary eligibility criteria?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a real disservice to criticize a program which is providing important benefits for close to 30,000 Canadians as a disastrous experiment.

We are giving an opportunity to people whose industry has collapsed to find not only a way of maintaining income benefits for their families, but also to begin to find some way to make adjustments to new jobs and new employment opportunities, a program that has been in effect for nine months.

It constantly amazes me that the Reform Party is so anxious to overturn and discredit initiatives designed to help Canadians deal with their immediate problems. It shows that whatever notion there is about Reform, it has nothing to do with investing in people.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to stand up before Canadian taxpayers and say that giving people who make \$200,000 a year more money is an important benefit to the country.

(1450)

TAGS is now at least \$385 million in the hole. Funds are being diverted from training, the most promising component of the program, to cover the shortfall. As illogical as it seems, the minister continues to defend giving those who make over \$200,000 per year financial support.

Given the serious financial constraints of TAGS, will the minister now focus the few dollars we have left on those people who really need the money and not on those making over \$200,000 a year?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons there are cost

overruns in the program is that since the program was announced over nine months ago, my colleague, the minister of fisheries, for reasons that are totally beyond the control of anyone certainly in this Chamber, has had to close down 14 additional sectors of the fishing industry.

That kind of calamity, which is the result of a ecological disaster being visited on us, is the reason why the program is facing the kind of pressures it is.

As I said in the House last week, we have established an independent evaluation through Price Waterhouse which has given us a series of clear recommendations on how to correct those programs. The recommendations are now being implemented, including those which apply to income testing.

At the same time we have to continue to apply the test of fairness to those who have had attachment to the fishery so we can begin to provide an alternative for them to be removed from the fishery.

Clearly fairness is not a word in the Reform Party's vocabulary.

* * *

[Translation]

WORKING LANGUAGE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Last Friday, in response to a question we had put to him, the Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs said that, upon returning to the House, the President of the Treasury Board would be able to provide us with an answer regarding the damning statistics on the working language of public service employees in the national capital region. Indeed, the latest report released by the Commissioner of Official Languages shows that only 44 per cent of francophone federal employees in the Ottawa–Hull area are able to work in French when not dealing with public inquiries.

How can the President of the Treasury Board not see in the fact that only 44 per cent of francophone federal employees in the national capital region are able to work in French an utter failure of institutional bilingualism?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the official languages commissioner also pointed out, there has been improvement and yes, more improvement is needed.

The official languages commissioner and Treasury Board have co-authored a brochure that deals with the question of

Oral Questions

language of work and the rights and responsibilities of public service employees. That is being distributed now.

Second, the commissioner made a number of recommendations on how we can strengthen language of work. We agree with all of those recommendations and will implement them.

Third, we will conduct audits to ensure that they are implemented and that the rights and responsibilities of public service employees in the official language of their choice is in fact respected.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the good will demonstrated by the President of the Treasury Board but there are other problems. I will point out to him that the Commissioner of Official Languages also confirmed that French was hardly ever used in written communications between public service employees in the national capital region.

How can the President of the Treasury Board tolerate that, in the federal capital, only one out of ten French speaking employees can use French in written communications?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a great deal of communication goes on in the French language and there should be more. There should be a comfort level for employees who have that as their mother tongue to be able to use it in correspondence.

We encourage deputy ministers and other officials at the beginning of a meeting, as I have done most recently at the beginning of a couple of meetings, to welcome everyone to use the official language of their choice so that we can give real meaning to the language of work policy.

* * *

(1455)

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since I did not get an answer last week, I would like to ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development about the allegations of widespread sexual abuse at the Lac Barrière reserve.

The minister has apparently known about this for months. Why has he done nothing?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a criminal matter. The police are investigating.

Our position in any of these investigations is to co-operate with the police, provide assistance and any information we have. However, we have to stay at arm's length from any criminal prosecution.

Oral Questions

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let us try another one. At the same reserve we now have allegations of financial misappropriation through paying \$255,000 in legal fees to a co-president of the aboriginal committee of the Liberal Party. How does the minister justify this?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again this is an allegation of criminal events. It is up to the Sûreté to do the investigation. We will co-operate fully with the police.

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[Translation]

GREEN PLAN

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment.

The latest federal budget marked the end of the Green Plan introduced in 1990 by the previous government. The Minister of the Environment has, to all intents and purposes, confirmed that this program, which before its funding was gradually cut back represented a unique environmental initiative, has been phased out for good.

In November 1993 the Minister of the Environment said that many positive things had come out of the Green Plan and she did not want to make sweeping changes just to be able to say she was the new minister.

That being said, why did the minister drop the Green Plan?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did not drop the Green Plan. In fact, we built on what the previous government left behind. Unfortunately, under the previous government, 60 per cent of the environment budget was sunseting funding, to expire after five years in the case of the Green Plan and the St. Lawrence action plan.

Thanks to the Minister of Finance, instead of having 60 per cent of its project funding at risk, Environment Canada's budget consists totally of long term and secured projects.

In the case of the St. Lawrence action plan, for instance, we no longer have to go back to cabinet for additional funding, since the project is 100 per cent funded through the annual budget. And the Green Plan, which was about to expire and was cut three or four times by the previous government, will no longer be subject to the political whims of the day.

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also directed to the Minister of the Environment.

We on this side of the House understood, despite what the minister just said, that the Green Plan had been cut by the government opposite.

That being said, does the Minister of the Environment realize that without the Green Plan, her environment commissioner will be similar, in a way, to the commissioner of official languages, and will observe and criticize, year in year out, and will not have the tools to take any kind of action?

[English]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat the answer to the hon. member so there is no misunderstanding.

Until the last budget, 60 per cent of the funding of Environment Canada was sunset funding. It meant that at any time, if one wanted to pursue the Great Lakes action plan, if one wanted to pursue the St. Lawrence action plan, if one wanted to pursue the North American waterfowl management plan, one had to continually go back to cabinet. Only 40 per cent of funding was long term and secured.

As a result of the work of the Minister of Finance, we now have 100 per cent long term funding. The green plan money that was scheduled by the previous government to run out after the election will be rolled into the permanent budget of the Department of the Environment so that we may have long term, 100 per cent funding which is not be subject to cuts by individual ministers for photo ops.

* * *

(1500)

WORLD BANK AND INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Minister of the Environment.

The World Bank and especially the International Monetary Fund are slow in making environmentally sustainable development a priority. In light of Canada's financial support of these institutions and the recent discussions at the Hamilton meeting of the G-7 environment ministers, can the minister tell us whether the G-7 leaders in Halifax will discuss measures that would turn the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund into environmentally sustainable institutions?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate not only the question of the hon. member but the work he put into the preparation phase for the G-7 environment ministers meeting.

Oral Questions

I want to underscore the consensus at the G-7 environment ministers meeting that in the review of international institutions, in particular the IMF and the World Bank as the ministers of finance are calling for more transparency so we are very specifically calling for more environmental transparency and more recognition of the fact that sustainability and sustainable development must be a very key part of any decision making on lending practices of the IMF and any practices of the World Bank.

Underlining the need for transparency, an open public process and sustainable development are the keys to any real reform of these international institutions.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, can the Deputy Prime Minister confidently stand in the House today and state publicly for the record and for the benefit of the provinces, which will be burdened with the administrative nightmare of Bill C-68, that the Liberals' gun legislation is constitutional in all its aspects?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for that answer.

Questions remain unanswered regarding whether sections of Bill C-68 may be contrary to the charter of rights and freedoms. The constitutionality of Bill C-68 is in question, and courts in Alberta and B.C. have declared the orders in council under Bill C-17, which have been used again by the Minister of Justice, to be invalid.

Would it not be prudent for the government to resolve these matters before proceeding to ram Bill C-68 through before the summer recess?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no intention on the part of the federal government to ram the bill through Parliament, nor is it the intention of the federal government to delay the bill unduly. It is taking a natural course through the House of Commons.

It is presently before the standing committee. We have witnesses and the witnesses are making excellent presentations. It is going as it was meant to go, and hopefully we will receive further good testimony from the witnesses, which we can review and perhaps make substantive amendments to the bill before it leaves committee.

[Translation]

GENETICALLY ALTERED FOODS

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Health Canada recently approved a variety of genetically altered tomatoes for import into Canada, without any studies being done on the long term effect of this product on consumers.

How does the minister explain the government's rapid capitulation to the forceful lobby of the American company Calgene and its approval of this product solely on the information provided government officials by the company?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada approved this product for import, because scientists at the Department of Health are satisfied that it presents no danger to Canadians and must be safe.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me say that the response the minister has given us is very reassuring.

I have a supplementary. Given that a number of genetically engineered products will be submitted to Health Canada for approval in the coming months, would the minister assure us that she will require Health Canada to undertake more serious studies before approving such products?

(1505)

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people at Health Canada are there to protect the health of Canadians. They take their work very seriously and will continue to do so.

* * *

[English]

CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO USE

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government is sponsoring an anti-tobacco conference in none other than the beautiful Italian resort of Bellagio. Last week the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health said the government is not donating a single penny to this conference. Yet information shows that Health Canada is giving \$900,000 and the International Development Research Centre, a crown corporation, is giving another \$2 million of the taxpayers' money to fund this conference.

Who is correct, the IDRC and Health Canada or the parliamentary secretary to the minister of Health?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that three million people die worldwide now as a result of tobacco. In our tobacco demand reduction strategy, a small percentage of the moneys allocated

Oral Questions

were put aside for international tobacco control. Some of those moneys were given to IDRC.

I believe, as do the members of the government, we cannot conquer the tobacco problems simply by working within our own boundaries. We must extend our help outside to developed and developing countries.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the Minister of Health that she cannot suck and blow on her tobacco reduction strategy at the same time.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: If we keep having language like that this place is going to go up in smoke.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health's own department showed that consumption of tobacco is up by 20 per cent in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick in the last 10 months. Yet our tobacco reduction strategy just mentioned by the hon. minister has been cut by 50 per cent. Why is the government spending \$3 million abroad while our smoking problem in Canada gets progressively worse?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where he gets all of his figures, but they are not always correct.

We are using the money from the tobacco manufacturers to combat their problems. During the tobacco demand reduction strategy the government imposed a surtax on the profits of the tobacco manufacturers. That is what we are using to combat tobacco and smoking.

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DRINKING WATER

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

A recent report from the Ottawa *Sun* indicated some provinces have not implemented federal government guidelines that regulate in our drinking water the levels of the cancer causing agent THM. What is the government doing to insist that the provinces adopt federal guidelines as soon as possible?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the quality of drinking water in Canada and the governing of such is a shared responsibility. In this case it is a shared responsibility among provinces, territories and municipalities.

The federal government does work with the provincial and municipal levels of government to set guidelines for water

treatment. As much as possible, we encourage other levels of government to adopt those guidelines, but that is as much power as we have in the matter.

* * *

(1510)

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

The auditor general's 1994 report virulently denounced the poor management performance of senior defence officials that is costing us, and I quote the auditor general, "hundreds of millions of dollars annually". However, despite the cuts made at National Defence, four new assistant deputy minister positions, with average salaries of over \$100,000, were created over the past two years. Furthermore, the pay scales for the deputy minister and the chief of defence staff were increased by \$20,000.

In this period of fiscal restraint, how can the minister justify these indecent salary hikes and the creation of four new costly senior positions at the Department of National Defence?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as to the specifics, the Minister of Defence is in the best position to answer exactly how his department is being run.

He and every other minister take the remarks of the auditor general very seriously and take the suggestions and try to work better cost efficiencies in all departments.

We are at the same time going through a downsizing in the public service as a result of the reduction in programs and services, again as a result of meeting our deficit reduction targets. Overall, in the Department of National Defence and all other departments there is a reduction in the number of employees by some 45,000.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand the President of the Treasury Board's reply. He is in favour of cuts, yet new positions are being created.

Does the President of the Treasury Board approve of the new deputy minister positions and the salary increases, which go totally against the recommendations of the auditor general, who decries bad habits and the creation of these positions? Does the President of the Treasury Board approve of this?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Minister of National Defence is the one who runs his department and is the person who is in the best position to answer that question.

There are some shifts in positions. Some positions may increase in some areas and decrease in other areas. Overall there is a decrease, which is in accordance with the policy of the government with respect to getting its deficit and debt reduction program under control.

* * *

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PENSIONS

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is continuing the concept of double standards, one for the politicians and the other for Canadians.

In the legislation it very quietly introduced one Friday afternoon and then attempted to jam through Parliament last Thursday, it is continuing one standard of pensions for ordinary Canadians and one set of principles for pensions for its members, their very own porky pension plan.

Why can the Deputy Prime Minister not understand that Canadians want her to lead by example and show restraint rather than padding her own pockets with her own porky pension plan?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the gall of the hon. member to get up after the whip of the Reform Party last week suggested a 50 per cent increase in the compensation level for members of Parliament, a 130 per cent increase in the salary.

The government has taken a responsible position by reducing MP pensions by some 33 per cent of the compensation package and at the same time setting a minimum age and ending double dipping.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Deputy Prime Minister did not want to answer the question, considering she is to be entitled to \$2.7 million of this porky pension plan.

The Liberal leader, Gordon Campbell, in British—

The Speaker: When questions are addressed they are usually addressed to the minister who has the administrative responsibility for it, so it is not so much a personal question. The last question that was asked was answered, and rightly so, by the President of the Treasury Board. He is the one who has the administrative responsibility in this area.

I ask the hon. member to please keep that in mind as he formulates his question.

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, to the President of the Treasury Board, B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell has said that elected officials should be treated no differently than other British Columbians when it comes to receiving pension benefits from taxpayers. Further, he states: "There should be a single standard for all people of this province with MLAs paying the same taxes, having the same choices as other British Columbians".

(1515)

Does he disagree with the Liberal leader in British Columbia or is he trying to put one over on Canadians at the federal level?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the exaggerated and extreme figures the third party manages to drag up.

It is incredible that the member would get up after one of the members of his party, the member for Calgary Centre, the whip of his party, to propose such an outlandish increase in the compensation level for the members of the House. That is not a fiscally responsible position. His party is not taking a fiscally responsible position on the question of MP pensions.

* * *

CANADIAN NATIONAL

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

On page 25 of the red book under the heading "securing new markets" it states Canada must resist Washington's hub and spoke approach to trade by providing political, demographic and economic counterweights to the United States.

Given those ideals, how did the government come to abandon that policy last Friday when it decided to make CN Rail shares available to U.S. interests which will inevitably pull Canadian export products through its economy and to its benefit?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fail to follow the reasoning of the hon. member because, as he would know, Canadian Pacific has no restrictions on its share ownership. I have not seen and I am pretty sure the hon. member has not seen any major change in the way Canadian Pacific handles its shipments as opposed to CN.

The main reason for the decision taken on Friday is western farmers and people from coast to coast want to maintain competitive rail systems in Canada. We believe CN on a level playing field with Canadian Pacific is the best way to achieve that.

Routine Proceedings

MINING

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have an important question for the Minister of Natural Resources.

In view of the strong provincial role in managing Canada's natural resources and the particular importance of mining to many areas of the country, especially northern Ontario, could the minister explain why it is appropriate that the federal government declare the second week of May national mining week?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is very pleased to declare the second week of May national mining week.

We are all aware that a prosperous minerals and metals industry is very important to all of Canada and benefits the economy of all Canadians. We attach great importance to those areas of federal jurisdiction that relate to mining such as international trade, international environment and the science and technology necessary to understand and develop policies in relation to those areas.

We work in partnership with the provinces and industry in these key areas. All provincial ministers of mines, all provincial mining associations and the Standing Committee on Natural Resources of the House recommended the proclamation of such a week.

The Speaker: This would bring to a conclusion the question period.

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my point of order relates to remarks made by the Minister of Transport about a question I asked in this House on Friday, May 5, 1995.

The Minister of Transport said I had betrayed a confidence of this House and questioned my integrity because I was quizzing him about a current issue. I did not rise on a point of order on the spot because I could not believe what I had just heard, given the seriousness of the accusations.

Unfortunately, on checking *Hansard*, I found that what I had heard was indeed what the Minister of Transport had said.

My question is this: How can I have betrayed the confidence of the House by asking the Minister of Transport a legitimate question on an issue featured on the front page of such leading newspapers as *La Presse* and *The Globe and Mail* with regard to the government's decision to privatize CN?

The figures quoted in my questions did not come any lock-up but were taken from the comments—

(1520)

The Speaker: Dear colleague, I reviewed last Friday's *Hansard* and read what was said. I also requested the videotape in order to see exactly what had gone on.

As far as the hon. member's question is concerned, it is not up to the Chair to answer and apologize, but I think that, at this stage, what the minister meant and what the hon. member understood is a matter of debate.

I will take this incident under advisement if you want me to, but at this point, I do not consider this to be a point of order. If there is more to it, I am listening.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): For clarification, Mr. Speaker, when remarks are made which are ruled unparliamentary, can we request that they be withdrawn? I think that is what my colleague wants to know.

The Speaker: Absolutely. When unparliamentary terms are used, members may ask that they be withdrawn. It is up to the Chair to decide, however. According to what I read in Friday's *Hansard*—and if you wish I will reread and review what was said—at this point, I must say that I have not found that the language used at the time was unparliamentary. However, I will review the matter and report to you as appropriate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 92 petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table in this House the eighth and ninth reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

In its eighth report, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts reviews Chapter 29, "Collecting Income Tax Debts"; Chapter 30, "Goods and Services Tax: Audit and Special Investigations"; and Chapter 31, "Ensuring Fairness of the Income Tax System: Detection of Non-Filers and Special Investigations", from the 1994 report of the auditor general.

In its eighth report the committee makes a series of recommendations concerning these chapters.

In its ninth report the committee reviews two other chapters from the 1994 report of the auditor general of Canada, which concern the Department of Finance and Revenue Canada, namely Chapter 32, "Income Tax Incentives for Research and Development", and Chapter 33, "Tax Assistance for Retirement Savings". Following the review of the last three chapters, the committee formulates another series of recommendations.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee asks the government to table a comprehensive response to these reports.

* * *

(1525)

[English]

PETITIONS

TOBACCO

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a petition which I wish to present.

The petitioners believe that since tobacco products are clearly linked to several diseases such as many forms of cancer, heart disease, stroke, emphysema and chronic bronchitis among others, and according to certain studies tobacco products can contain over 4,000 chemicals with as many as 43 causing cancer in humans causing some 38,000 deaths annually in Canada, the petitioners call on Parliament to remove the exemption for tobacco under the Hazardous Products Act.

The petitioners also believe in increasing the prices of tobacco rather than bringing in other enforcement provisions.

MINING

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq, Lib.):

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

[English]

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to table today a petition signed by 190 people from the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec.

The petitioners bring to Parliament's attention the importance of mining to numerous communities across Canada. Through employment and exports of mineral products mining has a significant impact on Canada's gross domestic product.

Therefore the petitioners call on Parliament to increase employment in the mining sector, promote exploration, rebuild Canada's mineral reserves, sustain mining communities and keep mining in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

UKRAINIAN CANADIANS

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to deal with the House of Commons unanimous motion of September 27, 1991 and to settle, acknowledge and redress the issues to the mutual satisfaction of all Ukrainian Canadians throughout Canada.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36. I wish to present a petition signed by a number of petitioners from my riding of Mississauga South.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society.

They also state the Income Tax Act discriminates against families that make the choice to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families that do decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

* * *

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TRANSITION ALLOWANCE ACT

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-324, an act to replace the allowance provided by the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act with an allowance funded by members' contributions to assist their transition back to private life.

(1530)

He said: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce in the House today my private member's bill on members of Parliament pensions.

This bill is based on input from my constituents and represents what the average Canadian feels an MP's pension plan should look like. Unlike the current government bill on this issue, my bill would do away with the cash for life plan in favour of a privately controlled RRSP style fund with no contributions from the taxpayer. My bill would allow MPs to plan ahead for the future or provide them with funds for transition back into private life.

This proposal is fair to all MPs as they will all be treated equally. There is none of this trough regular and trough light

Government Orders

which we hear from the other side that will result from the current government's amendments. More important, Madam Speaker, if you can hear me through the din, it is fairer to the taxpayers as they are no longer forced to foot the bill.

I present this bill on behalf of the people of Nanaimo—Cowichan and thank them for their help in its development. I hope all MPs will take the time to carefully review the bill and if nothing else, come to the realization that what Canadians want is real reform of the gold plated pension.

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

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2), because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 14 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

VETERANS REVIEW AND APPEAL BOARD ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-67, an Act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act, as reported with amendments from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): There are 12 amendments on the Notice Paper at report stage of Bill C-67, an Act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 1, 8, 9 and 12 will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 1 applies to Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 12.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be grouped for debate, but will be voted on separately in the following manner:

(a) The vote on Motion No. 2 will apply to Motion No. 4.

(b) Motions Nos. 3, 5 and 6 will be voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 7 will be debated and voted on separately.

Motion No. 10 will be debated and voted on separately.

Motion No. 11 will be debated and voted on separately.

I shall now propose Motions No. 1, 8, 9 and 12 to the House.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You might find consent to consider that the motions in group one which you have just indicated, assuming the members are here, can all be treated as having been put to the House without your having to read them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-67, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing lines 10 and 11, on page 1, with the following:

"vocates continued by section 7 of the Pensions Act;"

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-67, in Clause 46, be amended by replacing line 33, on page 12, with following:

"46. (1) The definitions "Chief" "

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-67, in Clause 47, be amended by adding after line 33, on page 14, the following:

"7. (1) There is hereby continued under the Minister a bureau to be known as the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, consisting of a Chief Pensions Advocate appointed by the Governor in Council and such other pensions advocates, officers and employees as may be required for the performance of the duties of the Bureau.

(2) The Chief Pensions Advocate and each pensions advocate shall be appointed from among persons who are members of the bar of any province.

(3) The Chief Pensions Advocate is the chief executive officer of the Bureau and has supervision over and direction of the work of the pensions advocates and other staff of the Bureau.

8. The Bureau is not part of the Department but it shall make such reports to the Minister as the Minister may direct.

9. (1) It is the duty of the Bureau, on request,

(a) to provide a counselling service to applicants and pensioners with respect to the application of this Act to them;

(b) to assist applicants and pensioners in the preparation of applications for review or of appeals under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*; and

Government Orders

(c) to arrange for applicants and pensioners to be represented by a pensions advocate at hearings on review or appeals under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*.

(2) The relationship between the Bureau and a person requesting its assistance is that of solicitor and client, and the Bureau shall not be required in any proceedings before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board to disclose any information or material in its possession relating to any such person."

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-67 be amended by deleting Clause 101.

(1535)

He said: Madam Speaker, the current situation with respect to veterans and their families is nothing short of appalling. Tens of thousands of men and women have risked their lives for this nation yet in their latter years, when they turn to the Department of Veterans Affairs for disability pensions, they run up against a bureaucratic nightmare. Before many make it through this quagmire they have passed on without being fairly compensated.

Veterans must wonder why the country they served so valiantly serves them now with such contempt. I find it passing strange that on a day when we are acknowledging the contribution of our veterans to this country, we are having to be critical about Bill C-67.

I want all my colleagues in the House to consider the following figures. The average turnaround time for veterans who apply for benefits is 18 to 20 months at first level. Due to the fact that the benefit of doubt clause has not been appropriately applied, only 30 per cent of cases are accepted. That is almost two years for veterans who currently average 73 years of age to find out their expected disability pension has been turned down. On the advice of their independent advocate, many appeal their cases, but this can take up to three years. Of those that appeal, 70 per cent end up receiving benefits; many may only receive a portion of the expected entitlement.

The situation is unacceptable. We are making thousands of veterans in their advanced years wait almost five years to receive a disability pension. Currently there is a backlog of 12,500 cases and 10,000 more veterans are expected to apply for benefits this year.

After being chastised by the subcommittee on veterans affairs, the government promised to act on behalf of veterans to correct this shameful situation. Bill C-67 is the government's answer.

One of my prime concerns with Bill C-67, and the thrust of Motions Nos. 1, 8, 9 and 12, is that it removes the right of veterans to have their first level application prepared by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, which has been a very important body to veterans as some of our members across the way may well know.

Under the current system, each veteran's application is prepared by a trained independent lawyer. In addition, each veteran enjoys solicitor-client privilege. The government claims the use of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates by veterans at first level is too time consuming and is largely responsible for the current 18 to 20 month turnaround. However, page 50 of the report by the subcommittee on veterans affairs entitled "Keeping Faith: Into the Future" clearly states that application preparation by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates consumes at maximum five months of the 18 to 20 month waiting period and in most cases consumes only two months.

If the Bureau of Pensions Advocates overprepares its cases, why are 70 per cent turned down at first level? There is no logic in that. The removal of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates from the first level process is ominous for a number of reasons.

(1540)

The veteran now relies on the department to prepare and adjudicate his or her first level decision. This is not only a conflict of interest but it also removes from the veteran the right of solicitor-client privilege. The importance of solicitor-client privilege cannot be understated.

In the subcommittee on veterans affairs report, "Keeping Faith: Into the future", Mrs. Frances L. Crummer, a witness who had been battling with the department for six years most eloquently states the need for solicitor-client privilege.

She states: "An important consideration which must not be forgotten is the average age and education level of the clients serviced by the bureau and the fact that most of them know little or nothing about how the system operates. Their link with the system is their advocate, the person in whom they place their trust". I can endorse this lady's reasoning from firsthand experience.

She goes on to say: "The solicitor-client privilege enshrined in the statute is one of the inherent strengths of the bureau and the Pension Act. It forms the basis for trust that the clients place in their advocate".

She goes on to say: "Changes could place clients in jeopardy and destroy their trust, not only in their advocate but ultimately in the system itself. No changes should even be contemplated in section 19 of the act which establishes the independence of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates. I feel it must remain independent of the department in order to properly service veterans and dependants".

What veterans face at first level could be an indifferent or incompetent pension officer who lacks the will or knowledge to inform veterans to pursue benefits to which they are entitled. I am also concerned that veterans may not be informed if they are able to apply for an appeal of the department's decision.

Government Orders

Even if the pension officers have the best intentions, I am not confident that the applications they fill out will be as good as that of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates. The end result could be a fast rate of first level rejections.

I foresee another difficulty with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates' being removed from the first level. Under Bill C-67 the size of the bureaucracy will be increased. The minister will be getting more power to influence the department's internal affairs. Under these proposals, the minister may have undue influence over the whole decision making process and the quality of service or rate of acceptance.

Departmental employees will be vulnerable to receiving direction which could deter them from encouraging veterans to pursue benefits and services to which they are entitled. They will also be under pressure to take part in fiscal restraint. Even an offhand remark by the minister could affect the way his staff deals with veterans.

With the current rejection rate of 70 per cent and an 18 to 20 month waiting period, I have no confidence that the removal of Bureau of Pensions Advocates from the first level will speed up the process and improve the acceptance ratio. Advocacy will suffer from a lack of continuity.

Currently an advocate from the bureau will deal with a veteran from first level to review and appeal stages ensuring that the advocate is familiar with the merits of their client's case throughout. Under the proposed system, the pension officer after first level will have no mandate to be involved in the case. Yet the Bureau of Pensions Advocates' lawyer would be unfamiliar with the case that has been passed on to him and would be unable to properly advise the veteran on the merits of his appeal.

A second aspect of this piece of legislation which concerns me is the proposal to join the Bureau of Pensions Advocates to the department. Again I am concerned about the chances of conflicts of interest arising and the lack of solicitor-client privilege. With the BPA restricted to hearing appeals and as part of the department, I fear that the Bureau of Pension Advocates may no longer provide the objective, expert, independent advice it currently offers, and it is good at it.

(1545)

As departmental employees, they may become party to any cost cutting or ratios alluded to by the minister because they will now be answerable to superiors within the department. I fail to see how this will serve the best interests of the veteran.

I encourage all members of the House to support these important amendments on behalf of all veterans.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to be involved in the report stage reading of Bill C-67, a bill that promises to bring many benefits to Canada's veterans.

It is appropriate that we are discussing Bill C-67 today because of V-E Day and the tributes that have been paid by all members of the House to our proud veterans who are heroes to us all.

A year ago a commitment was made to veterans that we would cut in half the turnaround time it takes to receive a disability pension. I was at that committee meeting and we ensured that it was followed up in a relatively short time by standards in the House.

We have been moving step by step toward that objective. Veterans Affairs Canada has already introduced numerous measures to improve the administration of the pension system.

With the legislation we have before us for discussion today, we will now take one giant step toward our objective. Bill C-67 puts in place the legislative measures needed to make the pension system more efficient.

The legislation gives Veterans Affairs Canada the authority to make first level decisions. It focuses the efforts of the lawyers and the Bureau of Pensions Advocates on preparing appeals for veterans. It merges the Canadian Pension Commission and the Veterans Appeal Board into one appeal body with two levels of appeal.

We have worked to keep all veterans' benefits intact. This bill will not take away any of the benefits. I want to stress that. Veterans still have the right to a two-step appeal process. They can still count on the help and expertise of trained lawyers if their application goes to appeal. By making the appeal system more efficient, we will cut down on the time that it takes for veterans to get their pensions. That is what it is all about.

I thank the Standing Committee of National Defence and Veterans Affairs for its excellent work on the bill. As parliamentary secretary I sat in on all the briefings from all witnesses and all the discussions both in the steering and in the main committee.

I thank the hon. member for Labrador who chaired the committee and other colleagues who from time to time acted as chairman. The committee heard from many veterans, their spouses, former commissioners of the Canadian Pension Commission, former members of the veterans appeals organizations. We heard all their testimony.

Many points of view were brought to the committee table. Members of the committee discussed a wide range of issues that arise from the legislation. Like my hon. colleague across the

Government Orders

floor, I want to reiterate the respect that our committee has for Canadian veterans. I thank the witnesses and committee colleagues for their hard work.

We are very much aware of the debt of gratitude that Canada owes its veterans. Particularly over the last year, indeed, the last two years it has become very obvious that Canadians from all walks of life and from all across the country are taking time to reflect on just what our veterans have done to provide the freedom that we sometimes take for granted.

I will speak more generally to the motions and to the bill itself. I would like to stress something I said earlier. The whole purpose of Bill C-67 is really not to touch benefits. The principle of benefits is not involved. The principle of Bill C-67 is to reduce the time it takes for veterans to go through the process of application and the two levels of appeal. Indeed that is necessary.

I am disappointed that this was not done before. It is happening today. With the average age of veterans at 75 and particularly as some veterans are just now experiencing the effects of certain illnesses and discrepancies that may have occurred as long as 50 years ago, it is very difficult and time consuming to track down and document the information. It is even more important because of the average age and the difficulty as time goes on in going back through records to hone and to refine the process so that it reduces the time.

(1550)

A matter of principle underlies all my specific comments on the motions as we go forward today. I will not be in favour of any amendment that increases the time it takes to provide veterans with the pensions that they rightfully deserve.

It is not a question of partisan politics. It is a question of the logic behind the motion. Does it increase the time? If it decreases the time I would be fully in favour of it. If the end result of the motion is to increase the time, then it is counter to the bill and I will not be able to support it.

I note also that all the motions put forward today are by members or stand-in members of the standing committee who had ample opportunity to raise these issues in the months that we had the bill under consideration. In many cases they come out of the blue and do not do anything for veterans. They certainly do not relate to any discussions we ever had in committee. I am not really sure of the impetus behind the motions. I cannot hold myself responsible for knowing what motivates the other side of the House.

In group one we are looking at Motions Nos. 1, 8, 9 and 12. Their intent, if I understood my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan properly, is to keep the Bureau of Pension Advocates separate so that it will be available at the first level of application.

That runs counter to the central principle of the bill, a principle agreed to at second reading and accepted by the standing committee. The refocusing of the mandate of the Bureau of Pension Advocates away from dealing with the first level of pension claims to allow it to be active in the conduct of appeals was never once discussed in any detail in committee.

It was discussed in committee in a general sense. I do not remember any strong proposals being made by members of the committee following the various witnesses who appeared before us. We reached the consensus that was reported in the bill. I do not see any reason for changes. Quite the contrary, I believe the motion proposed would further impede the progress and would cause more time for the first application to be considered.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, consideration of Bill C-67, an Act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act, is now at report stage before the House.

As you know, this bill seeks to restructure the process for the allocation of disability pensions to veterans. The bill also repeals the Canadian Pension Commission and transfers the responsibility of all initial decisions to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. It also establishes a board to review decisions and to hear appeals. Finally, the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, which was formerly an independent body, will now be integrated into the Department of Veterans Affairs. The bureau will deal with applications made to the new board.

This bill proposes many changes. The evaluation process regarding veterans' pensions has been the subject of numerous debates over the years, ever since the issue of providing a pension for any type of disability suffered by a member of the armed forces in the line of duty was first considered.

(1555)

Issues such as compensation, eligibility to a pension, assessment of that pension, as well as the review and appeal process and the support offered to veterans were all discussed, not to mention time frames, arrears and certain discretionary actions taken by the department.

The pension system currently in effect is the result of all these debates and of all the legislative measures which followed. For example, we can think of the Woods committee, in the sixties, which led to the 1971 reform of the Pension Act. History tells us that laws follow changes: they do not trigger them.

It is precisely because of change that we are trying to make the processing of applications more flexible. Our top priority is to speed up the process so that veterans who are getting older

Government Orders

collect more quickly the pension to which they are entitled. We should remove any barrier that stands in the way.

This stage begins with the examination of four amendments moved by Reform members. If I am not mistaken, those four motions in the first group deal with two main points. The first is that the Bureau of Pensions Advocates should remain independent from the department. The second one is that the services of that Bureau should be available for first time applications.

Reform amendments would keep the Bureau of Pensions Advocates under the Pension Act. They want to maintain the independence of the Bureau and full access for applicants. However, it has not been demonstrated in committee that this would bring substantial benefits. In many cases, it would be a waste of time.

With the witnesses who appeared in committee, we discussed access to and independence of the Bureau. As a matter of fact, no study made in the last few years questioned the existence of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates. Neither the assessment of pensions in 1992 nor the Marshall report tabled last Fall questioned that. The consensus was that the Bureau should remain at arm's-length with the minister.

We should not forget the main thrust of this bill, which is to speed up the processing of applications. We know full well that, even when the services of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates were used at the very beginning, only 30 per cent of the claims made to the Canadian Pension Commission were approved. When the rejected claims were sent to the next levels of decision, the approval rate jumped to 70 per cent. Only 30 per cent of the Commission's decisions were maintained, despite the legal services provided by the Bureau.

But what is even more surprising is that Mr. Chartier, the chairman of the Canadian Pension Commission, was unable to answer our questions about the 30 per cent success rate of his organization compared to the 70 per cent success rate of the Board, which overrode 70 per cent of the first decisions made by his Commission. Mr. Chartier stated that he could not explain this difference and that he never thought about examining the issue. He told us he was very concerned about hanging on to work through careful scheduling of the files review.

I must say that what I found the most convincing during the chairman's testimony was his nonchalance in terms of the delays our veterans must face. We just have to support the department's bill even though an arbitrary decision can be made at the first level. The proposed merger is not such a bad idea after all.

The bill provides for the pensions advocates to deal with all the claims made to the new board which will be responsible for the reviews and the appeals. Hence, the free legal aid service will be maintained where needed. We hope that an increasing number of claims will be approved at the first level. This is the

main object of this bill, to open up the pension allocation system and to make it a lot more flexible.

(1600)

We think that a forms clerk or expert would be much more useful to help a claimant to complete the forms and make their way through the system. The goal here is to speed up the process while providing assistance at the review and appeal level to those who need legal advice or help in their approach. This is why we will oppose the amendments put forward by the Reform Party.

We will reject the Reform's motions to "judicialize" even more the process at the first decision level. We must trust the proposed change given the performance of the Canadian Pension Commission so far.

[English]

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion, the nays have it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

A recorded division will also apply to Motions 8, 9 and 12.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are grouped for debate but will be voted on in the following manner. The vote on Motion No. 2 applies to Motion No. 4. Motions Nos. 3, 5 and 6 will be voted on separately.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-67, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 9 to 15, on page 2, with the following:

"4. There is hereby established an independent board, to be known as the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, consisting of

Government Orders

(a) not more than twenty-nine permanent members to be appointed by the Governor in Council after consultation with the government of each province and such committee of the House of Commons established or designated by that House to consider matters respecting veterans affairs; and

(b) such number of temporary members as are appointed in accordance with section 6.”

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-67, in Clause 6, be amended by adding after line 25, on page 2, the following:

“(1.1) No appointment may be made under subsection (1) unless there has first been consultation in respect of that appointment with the government of each province and such committee of the House of Commons established or designated by the House to consider matters respecting veterans affairs.”

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-67, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing lines 3 to 5, on page 3, with the following:

“8. (1) The Governor in Council shall, after consultation with the government of each province and such committee of the House of Commons established or designated by that House to consider matters respecting veterans affairs, designate a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from among the permanent members.”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-67, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing lines 19 to 22, on page 3, with the following:

“(5) If both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are absent or unable to act, a member designated by the Minister shall act as Chairperson.

(6) If the office of the Chairperson and the office of the Deputy Chairperson are vacant, the Minister shall designate a member to act as Chairperson and that member shall act in that capacity until such time as the Governor in Council designates a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson under subsection (7).

(7) Where the office of the Chairperson and the office of the Deputy Chairperson are vacant, the Governor in Council shall, as soon as possible after the vacancies and after consultation with the government of each province and such committee of the House of Commons established or designated by that House to consider matters respecting veterans affairs, designate a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from among the permanent members.”

[English]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-67, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing lines 18 to 20, on page 2, with the following:

“(2) The terms of the permanent members appointed under section 4 shall be determined by lot, with ten permanent members to be appointed for a term not exceeding three years, an additional ten permanent members to be appointed for a term not exceeding six years and the remaining nine permanent members to be appointed for a term not exceeding nine years.

(3) Notwithstanding sub-section (2) and subject to subsection (4), a permanent member may agree with another permanent member to exchange the terms they were given under subsection (2).

(4) No permanent member shall hold office, whether by reappointment or by an exchange, for more than twelve years.”

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, once again, I would like to stress that we are at the report stage of Bill C-67, an act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act.

Need I remind you that this bill's goal is to restructure the entire allowance system for veterans' disability pensions? It abolishes the Canadian Pension Commission. It transfers responsibility for first decisions to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. It sets up a board which will be responsible for hearing review requests and appeals at every stage of the process. Lastly, it integrates the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, formerly an independent organization, into the department.

During the debate at second reading, we told the government that we agree with the basic principle of reducing processing time, but that we question the methods proposed in this bill to reach that goal. After consideration in committee, we concluded that, excepting senior officials and the government, most veterans' associations and individuals seriously doubt that this restructuring will reach the desired ends.

In addition, veterans are really worried about two issues: the increased powers of the department and their vested rights. That is why we seized the clause by clause review and now seize the report stage in the House as opportunities to propose improvements to the bill. We have attempted to meet the goal of reducing processing time while addressing their concerns.

One of the fears that keeps on resurfacing concerns the increased power of the minister.

(1605)

We see the federal government concentrating more and more powers in the hands of fewer and fewer people. This tendency is a threat to equity in the case of our veterans. For the sake of efficiency it may be necessary to concentrate certain powers, but the only way to prevent abuse or monumental errors under such conditions is to provide for broader consultation mechanisms.

That is what the Bloc Québécois had in mind when it proposed its amendments. I believe it is necessary for the government to proceed with transparency. It must consult with the provinces. It must control its centralist tendencies and its inclination to make decisions alone, as the lord and master, with respect to everything that concerns the public interest.

Government Orders

Partisan appointments are a real threat. Too often, political considerations tend to outweigh qualifications when appointing people to what are often positions of consequence. Lack of efficiency or bias in some public services can often be traced to such considerations.

The Bloc Québécois hopes to counter this tendency to concentrate power, and that is the purpose of our contributions to the debate on bills like Bill C-43 on lobbyists, Bill C-65 and this particular bill. The purpose of all four amendments is to ensure that appointments to the new board are conditional on consultation with the government of each province and with the designated committee of the House of Commons.

Our amendments concern three clauses: clause 4, appointment of board members; clause 6, appointment of temporary members; and clause 8, designation of the chairperson and deputy chairperson and acting designations.

Clause 4 provides for establishing the new veterans review and appeal board, consisting of not more than 29 permanent members. As it stands now, the clause provides that these permanent members are to be appointed by the governor in council—in other words, the Prime Minister—without further ado. Our amendment proposes that permanent members be appointed after consultation with the government of each province and after consultation with the committee of the House. We felt that two consultations prior to any appointment provided sufficient guarantees that the appointment process would be valid. The process also gives appointees greater legitimacy.

We must not forget that the board's permanent members together form the staff of a quasi legal organization and must therefore be beyond reproach.

The same applies to the temporary members provided for under clause 6 of the bill. These temporary members will be employed for a particular term and for a specific duty in order to meet certain one time needs. In the case of this board, any number of persons may be appointed for a term not exceeding two years, but may be reappointed for one additional term. These temporary board members may be appointed to help alleviate the board's workload, which may have become too great through too great a backlog, too many cases or too many contested decisions. The appointment of the temporary members, like that of the permanent members, must, in our opinion, be reviewed by each province and the standing committee before taking effect. Otherwise, excesses could occur if this appointment system is not properly supervised, and nothing in this government's actions would rule out such a possibility.

Our third and fourth amendments concern clause 8, which pertains to the extremely important positions of chairperson and deputy chairperson of the board. Clauses 8(2) and 8(3) of the bill clearly define the role of the tribunal chairperson and, accord-

ingly, all that the position involves. I would draw them to your attention, and I quote: "The Chairperson is the chief executive officer of the Board and has supervision over and direction of the work of the Board including the allocation of work among its members, the conduct of its work, the management of its internal affairs and the duties of its staff. The Chairperson shall make such reports to the Minister as the Minister may require respecting the use of the resources allocated to the Board". It is, therefore a very important role.

(1610)

Consequently, we would like both the chairperson and deputy chairperson, who is to occupy the chair if the chairperson is absent, to be appointed in consultation with the provinces and the House standing committee. Should both positions become vacant, we ask that there be a two cycle mechanism. First, the minister would immediately choose replacements among the board members. Then, the vacancies would be filled the same way as initially, namely in consultation with the provinces and the House standing committee. With these interim appointments made by the minister, the board would not be left rudderless during the consultation process.

This, in short, is what the Bloc Québécois is asking for, to make the appointment process more transparent. The federal government must learn to consult the provinces more often. Furthermore, appointments must no longer be made behind the scene, in the back rooms of power where the government admits only its friends, powerful lobbyists and the rich. Otherwise, even the best public administration system might fall prey to incompetence and arbitrary decisions.

We do not want this to happen to the veterans' pension assessment system. Twenty four years ago, the Minister of Veteran Affairs, the hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé, agreed in this House that it was essential that decisions concerning veterans be arrived at in the spirit of fairness and impartiality. I trust that the present government finds this equally important.

This is why I expect our colleagues opposite to support our amendments in favour of more transparent mechanisms.

[English]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would like to address a few words under group two to Motion No. 3. I hope that is appropriate at this time.

A number of witnesses presenting their reports on Bill C-67 to the Standing Committee on Defence and Veterans Affairs complained about the length of time members could be appointed to the veterans review and appeal board. They felt that ten-year terms with eligibility for an additional ten years is excessive, and I agree.

Appointments with terms like this allow little opportunity for new blood to come into the system. They also allow the

Government Orders

government to stuff the board full of political appointees who will remain long after the government has gone.

Motion No. 3, which is our amendment to clause 5 of Bill C-67, will ensure that there is plenty of turnover, allowing a frequent infusion of new blood to the board. In addition, no government will be allowed to dominate the board long after it has been voted out of power. It calls for ten permanent members to be appointed for three years, ten more for six years, and the remaining nine for nine years. Permanent members will be eligible for reappointment, but no member will be able to sit on the board for more than twelve years. Provision exists for a permanent member to trade their term with another permanent member. Length of term is decided by lot.

I encourage all members to consider seriously this amendment. It would do much to defuse public criticism of political appointees.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by both my colleagues on Motions 2, 4, 5, and 6 and on Motion No. 3.

I understand Motions 2 and 4 will be voted on as a group and then Motions 3, 5, and 6 will be voted on separately.

Let me speak about Motions 2, 4, 5, and 6 submitted by the Bloc. As I understand it, the thrust of these amendments would add delays to the process of appointing members to the veterans review and appeal board. This is surely counter to the thrust of the bill. The proposal as it is made will take time and it will slow the process down.

(1615)

I believe it runs counter to the attitude expressed by the Bloc in committee where it seemed committed to helping veterans. In short, these amendments do absolutely nothing for veterans.

Further, the motions call for reasonable representation and appointments to be made after consultation with provincial governments and approval of appointments by the standing committee of the House. On the federal side the government is a national government which represents the interests of all Canadians. That is why we have 295 members from all regions of Canada. It has ensured and will continue to ensure appointments to federal boards and agencies are qualified and are representative of Canada as a whole, taking into account such factors as region, gender and ethnicity and that appropriate and necessary consultations occur before such appointments are made.

To put the regional factor into legislation would restrict the government's flexibility in achieving a balance of all of these factors and in appointing the most qualified candidates. The

federal government is the only body which can sit all of these matrixes and compare one region with another.

With respect to provincial consultation, to mandate by statute that the provinces must be consulted prior to appointments being made in virtually every federal body, as the Bloc Quebecois appears to propose, would be needlessly cumbersome, time consuming and costly. In addition, provincial statutes do not include a requirement to consult the federal government on all appointments made by the lieutenant governor in council. It would be as inappropriate to require the federal government to consult provincial governments on appointments to agencies created by federal legislation as it would be to require provincial governments to consult the federal government on appointments to agencies created by provincial legislation.

With respect to approval by the standing committee, to grant the standing committee the right to approve appointments would be to usurp the prerogative of the governor in council. It would represent a fundamental change in the executive powers of the crown, the House of Commons and the parliamentary system of government.

I remind hon. members from all sides of the House that Bill C-67 reflects the government's commitment to simply change the structure, to streamline the operation wherever possible and to ensure federal agencies continue to be relevant to Canada's needs and serve Canadians as effectively as possible.

The bill is not related to fundamental questions such as the checks and balances of the parliamentary system. Those are built in. I feel fully confident the bill as discussed and as presented with its amendments from the day we studied it clause by clause, I think on April 27, is quite satisfactory. This never really came up in discussion at any time to my memory.

I got quite a kick out of Motion No. 3 proposed by my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan. He is afraid of this great fear the third party has of political patronage. I am not sure where it comes from but he nodded and tacitly agreed this was behind the proposal he made. I see a big smile on his face. I am sure he cannot be serious about this kind of an amendment. He is trying to create three classes of members, those appointed for three years, six years and nine years.

These are quasi-judicial organizations and the appointees, while they are not actually judges, are like judges. They make some very serious judgments. It would not be in the interest of the intent of the bill, it would not be prudent and it would not be wise to create a hierarchy among these members. The hon. member knows that. For the disability pension system to appear fair and transparent it must be clearly understood that all members of the new board are equal and they must be seen as equal by all parties in the House, no matter which party is in

Government Orders

government. I am sure the hon. member is not too worried about his party being in government for a long time. Perhaps it is a technical concern which that party has.

Historically veterans affairs, and anyone involved in veterans affairs can attest to this fact, have been treated in a non-partisan way by successive Canadian governments. I think the hon. member from the Bloc who put the amendment forward would agree with that.

Our concern remains first and foremost with the veterans and that will continue. I find it very difficult in my heart to support these amendments.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question on Motion No. 2?

Resuming debate. The hon. member for La Prairie.

(1620)

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise after the member for Châteauguay to speak to Bill C-67, an act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act.

What changes will be brought about by this bill in its present form? To put it in a nutshell, we can say that this legislation merges the Canadian Pension Commission and the Veterans Appeal Board and that, in future, applications for benefits will be examined by the Minister of Veterans Affairs. His decisions will be subject to review by or appeal to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. Finally, the Bureau of Pensions Advocates will become part of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

As my colleague, the member for Châteauguay, said earlier, the new Veterans Review and Appeal Board is an independent board consisting of not more than twenty-nine permanent members, to be appointed by the governor in council for a term not exceeding ten years, but eligible to reappointment. The chairperson and deputy chairperson are also designated by the governor in council.

This bill also amends the Pension Act. Part I, which defines the Canadian Pension Commission, and Part II, which defines the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, are replaced by a new part describing the minister's powers.

In a sense, the minister is inheriting all of the functions and powers held so far by the Canadian Pension Commission in terms of first applications and first decisions. The eligibility of applications for awards will thus depend directly on the minister.

Is there not a risk that decisions relating to veterans will lack a certain impartiality and independence?

When Bill C-67 was tabled for first reading on December 15, 1994, the secretary of state for veterans argued that a thorough

change in structures was required in order to substantially reduce delays in the processing of applications for awards.

According to the secretary of state, this initiative is part of the review of all government agencies and commissions which was undertaken by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

We share the view of the hon. member for Châteauguay, who is in favour of the government's basic objective of reducing administrative delays and speeding up the decision-making process in files management.

However, we also share the concern of the hon. member for Châteauguay, who is questioning the means proposed by the government party to achieve this necessary objective of reducing delays in the processing of applications.

We, of the Bloc Québécois, believe that to subject first decisions to ministerial authority would be a step backwards and a disturbing measure. We wonder why it is necessary to repatriate pensions advocates to the department when their independence was previously considered essential.

The position of the Bloc Québécois is that veterans' applications should be speeded up within structures that are impartial, transparent and fair. None of the suggestions put forward by the hon. member for Châteauguay challenges the principle whereby the decision process and the advocate system would remain independent from the minister's authority.

Like the Reform Party critic, we too deplore the lack of consultation with veterans' associations and the government's preference for outside consultants; in this case, it sought the advice of two management consulting firms. We recognize in this the Liberals' preference for lobbyists and the well to do, the owners of these management consulting firms.

The Royal Canadian Legion and the veterans of the Canadian navy and armed forces have both expressed serious reservations about Bill C-67, but the government prefers to listen to well paid management consultants. Party fundraising does have its price, it would appear.

Three citizens came before the standing committee to say how much Bill C-67 would harm veterans. I wonder if their remarks reached the minister, who will have most of the discretionary power in the future.

(1625)

We agree with the principle of reducing processing time, but we have serious reservations about the means put forward to reach this goal. Other more concrete measures might improve the processing time without requiring a revamping of the administrative structure. We are concerned about increased authority for the minister and the decrease in services to veterans.

The Chrétien government is once again showing its lack of openness, its disregard for provincial governments and its centralizing tendencies. Once again, the Prime Minister is using public funds to treat his friends better, instead of serving the

Government Orders

interests of Canadians. The 29 vacancies of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, high-paying full time jobs for a renewable term of ten years, will be filled by friends of the Liberals.

To prevent this new Liberal scheme, we strongly support the four motions put forward by the member for Châteauguay, which are aimed at increasing transparency within the federal government. These four motions ask for the appointments required for the new Veterans Review and Appeal Board, under clauses 4 to 34 of the bill, to be made only after consultations with the provinces and the appropriate committee of the House. This would ensure a better distribution of power by not leaving too much power in the hands of the minister himself.

These motions concern the appointment of permanent members and of temporary members, the designation of a chairperson and of a deputy chairperson as well as the designation of an acting chairperson and of an acting deputy chairperson. I strongly support these four motions put forward today by the member for Châteauguay.

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): As you know, Madam Speaker, yesterday, almost everywhere in Canada, we were commemorating the end of the Second World War. In my riding of Shefford and in Grandby I had the honour to meet with some of the veterans and whether it was Mr. Benoit, Mr. Lemay, Mr. Brodeur, Mr. Saint-Onge and many others, during the Second World War, they were young and served in the military. Some of them gave five years of their lives to their country.

Today, I am going to give you my point of view on Bill C-67, an Act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act.

The immediate result of the restructuring will be the merging of the Canadian Pension Commission and the Veterans Appeal Board. I am particularly concerned with this aspect of the bill which appears quite contentious to me.

Once the bill is passed, applications will be reviewed directly by the minister and his close collaborators, commissioners and officials. The decisions so taken will nevertheless be open for review and appeal in front of the veterans Board.

Consideration of the bill tends to indicate that there might be a loss of acquired rights for veterans, without proof that the recognized problems which led to this reform will be dealt with by this bill.

We can rightly believe that the fundamental argument of the government to justify the proposed changes is to speed up the timeframe for pensions to be awarded. These changes to the decision process are deemed to go directly to the root of the perceived problems.

It is with that in mind that the Secretary of State for Veterans tabled Bill C-67 on December 15. He also tabled an explanatory note which alluded clearly to the overly long delays and the slow processing of applications, and which also criticized the present pension awarding system.

Indeed, according to an analysis done by the government, the main reason for this slow process is the fact that the structures and agencies awarding the pensions are widely scattered.

(1630)

The Bureau of Pensions Advocates and the Canadian Pension Commission are being blamed. In order to resolve the problem of the delays incurred in awarding pensions, the government proposes to abolish the Canadian Pension Commission, transfer its responsibilities to the minister and his officials, transfer its resources to a new appeal board, and integrate the Bureau of Pensions Advocates into the Department of Veterans Affairs. All this would come under the department's control.

The bureau will no longer serve veterans, except when an appeal is filed. According to the deputy minister, these measures should reduce the average delay following the first pension application from 18 to 9 months. As you know, those currently applying are often 70 or 75 years old. It is therefore necessary to reduce delays, and we agree with that.

Most of the groups concerned agree that current delays are too long and should be reduced. However, as pointed out in the Marshall report, the figures now available in this regard are in dispute.

The red tape involved in processing applications was noted for the first time in the 1986 report of the Auditor General of Canada, Chapter 13, Section 13.98 and the following sections. So this problem is nothing new. It was known even in 1986.

As you can see, this delay problem did not surface yesterday. Beyond the award system as such, moving the headquarters from Ottawa to Charlottetown in 1983-84 was clearly identified as a major reason for longer processing delays.

This observation does not take anything away from Charlottetown employees, who, in my opinion, do their best to meet demand; rather, it is aimed at the system in which they operate. For example, why are fully qualified district physicians required to submit case assessments to the approval of head office physicians who are no more qualified than they are?

The central authorities' compulsive need to control everything is in a way the main obstacle leading to excessive delays in the award process. So, what undermines the present system is not the various authorities with different mandates but rather the duplication of certain phases of verification, validation and

Government Orders

consistency between authorities. Would it not be better to decentralize the entire decision-making process to improve access to services?

In spite of everything, the federal government is considering shortening the waiting period for pensions by eliminating the Canadian Pension Commission, transferring all of its responsibilities to the department, assigning its personnel to a new board and making the Bureau of Pensions Advocates a part of the department.

I wonder about the appropriateness of these measures which, as far as I can see, come with no guarantee of producing savings within the given time frame, while the right to be represented in the first instance is certainly being removed. The Canadian Pension Commission is an independent decision making agency. Delays directly related to this activity generally do not exceed 20 days.

Abolishing the Canadian Pension Commission is not, in my opinion, a valid way of reducing delays significantly. I cannot understand, under the circumstances, how the department can come to the conclusion that this measure will reduce the current waiting period by four months.

As for the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, it loses its status as an independent agency, becoming a part of the department. Moreover, it will no longer provide assistance to veterans filing their first application.

(1635)

The issue of conflict of interest and independence concerning this Bureau was examined extensively in the late 1960s and this actually led to the Bureau being detached from the department in 1971.

Incidentally, providing this kind of assistance from the beginning ensures that applicants have support every step of the way. At present, nearly half of all first applications are approved without any further need for review. How will the approval rate be affected if there is no more legal support for applications and no independent and impartial commission?

I seriously doubt that the proposals contained in this bill will bring about any reduction in the processing time. The government's solution, in my opinion, overlooks such basic objectives as the independence of a body, as well as the decentralization of power and decision-making. The legislation should have focused more on regrouping the eligibility and evaluation steps, to speed up the process leading to a pension being awarded. As well, entirely favourable decisions should only need to go through one stage.

Most applicants are older people who need an answer quickly. As I said before, I met some extraordinary people in my riding, people who have a sense of honour, people who gave three, four or five years of their lives. Some were imprisoned; some were injured. These people need an answer quickly. This is not a

question of bureaucratic reorganization, exclusion of services, or reduced assistance. The purpose is to ensure the efficiency of a process which is based on favourable consideration of veterans.

We must not merely say once every 50 years that we love our veterans. We must table legislation designed to help them. These people need our support, and we must do everything we can to provide them with quality service. In my opinion, subjecting initial decisions to ministerial authority is a step backward. It is worrisome to say the least. There will be much more control.

I truly hope that veterans will enjoy speedier processing of their applications, through measures which are based on fairness, transparency and equity.

Madam Speaker, you can rest assured that the Bloc Québécois takes its role seriously, and that it will closely monitor the government's reform. Our only concern is to ensure that veterans are satisfied with the services provided to them.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

An hon. member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 2, which will also apply to Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8) the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The next question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8) the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

(1640)

The next question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour of them motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), the division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 6. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-67, in Clause 28, be amended by replacing lines 18 to 23, on page 6, with the following:

“28. An appellant may make a written submission to the appeal panel or may appear before it, in person or by representative and at their own expense, to present documentary evidence and written or oral arguments, but the appeal panel shall not accept oral testimony.”

He said: Madam Speaker, our intervention on this is very short, sweet and simple. It concerns only clause 28. We do not mean to change the intent or meaning of clause 28. Very simply, we ask that the wording be clarified to ensure that appellants will clearly understand their rights. As it is worded now, it is vague as to rights. The intent of our motion is to clear up the language to ensure that appellants clearly understand their rights.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comment from my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan.

Motion No. 7 confuses what was a confusing situation which was clarified in the amendment. It is difficult if one was not a committee member to wrap one's mind around this, but essentially the clause instructs the applicant in what can be done at a certain process in the bill.

In the amendment we clarified with respect to documentation presented at the hearing that the documentation could be both written and oral, documentation as differing from evidence. Nobody meant to change, as the hon. member said, the intent of the clause. The intent was that oral and written documentation could be presented. Therefore when the veteran came to present his case the documentation could be taken in front of the board having been considered by the board and then the veteran could speak giving oral documentation. Oral evidence could not be presented and only documented evidence could be submitted.

In committee we essentially did what is being achieved by the proposal being made by the Reform Party. It wants to insert the term oral. In fact that was taken out of the first clause on amendment because it was considered to be confusing.

This does not appear in the bill because we felt it was not necessary to reprint the bill and we would save the government the expense of doing it since there were so few amendments. However, to clarify the clause we divided clause 28 into two subclauses to say that subject to subparagraph (2) the applicant could make oral and written documentation but at his own expense et cetera, and could present oral argument.

Government Orders

(1645)

To make sure that the understanding is there in subclause (2) it is stated that only documented evidence, as opposed to oral evidence, can be submitted under subclause (1). Therefore, I do not believe the wording does anything to improve on the amendment being made.

This would be amplified in regulations and would be crystal clear to the applicant. Therefore, I do not think there is any need for an amendment to clarify the subclause.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, Motion No. 7, introduced by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, echoes debates which took place in committee. At our very first meeting to study Bill C-67, on February 16, our colleague pointed out that clause 28 is ambiguous. This clause stipulates the manner in which a request to appear before an appeal panel of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board must be made. It stipulates that an appellant may present evidence and arguments to support a case, but at the same time, as it now stands, the board cannot hear oral testimony.

Therefore, our colleague asked Brian Chambers, a legal advisor for the Department of Justice, a few questions. He tried to explain to us the nuance between “oral arguments” and “evidence presented under the form of testimony”. Unfortunately, his explanation was not compelling in the least, and we still had doubts and found the clause ambiguous. We therefore reached the consensus that we would have to modify clause 28, in order to clarify what was meant by the word “evidence” and by the word “arguments”.

This is what the amendment proposed by the Reform member does. The amendment essentially aims to specify that, when an appellant submits evidence, what is meant is documentary evidence. By the same token, when the clause mentions arguments presented by an appellant before the appeal panel of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, we can only understand that to mean oral and written arguments. This would clarify that a veteran or that person’s representative cannot present oral testimony which contains evidence. All oral presentations must be limited to arguments, that is, the reasoning on which the appeal request before the tribunal is based. No new facts can be submitted in this manner at this stage. If an appellant or a representative wishes to submit new facts as evidence, they must do so in writing, in the form of a document.

The official opposition agrees with this point and consequently supports the proposed amendment and Motion No. 7 concerning clause 28 of Bill C-67.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-67, in Clause 48, be amended by replacing line 34, on page 14, with following:

“48. Section 24 of the Act is replaced by the following:

“24. (1) When a pensioner has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of six months or more, the payment of his pension shall be discontinued and no pension shall be paid to the pensioner for or in respect of the term of that imprisonment, except that the Minister has discretion to direct the payment of the pension or part of it to any person who was being or was entitled to be supported by the pensioner at the time of the arrest of the pensioner or, if in the opinion of the Minister it would be of exceptional benefit or advantage to the pensioner, the Minister may in the Minister’s discretion direct the payment of the pension or a part thereof to or for the pensioner.

(2) On the pensioner’s release from imprisonment, payment of his pension shall be reconsidered as from the date of release and in accordance with the extent of the disability of the pensioner then shown to exist or, in the case of a pensioner pensioned on account of the death of a member of the forces, in accordance with the rates set out in Schedule II or determined pursuant to sub-section 34(7) or 45(3), whichever rates are applicable.”

He said: Madam Speaker, while researching this bill it came to our attention that section 24 of the Pension Act was being repealed with this bill. Section 24 of the Pension Act states:

24.(1) When a pensioner has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of six months or more, the payment of his pension shall be discontinued and no pension shall be paid to the pensioner for or in respect of the term of that imprisonment,

Given the cost of incarceration to the public purse, it is only fitting that the government not pay a government funded pension to a prisoner.

Government Orders

Section 24 of the Pension Act must not be removed. This section of the Pension Act is also very reasonable. Consideration is taken of the dependants of the pensioner who rely on the pensioner's disability pension income. It also gives the minister discretion to allow the pensioner to continue to collect the pension if special circumstances exist.

(1650)

Therefore I call on all members to support Motion No. 10.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our response to this motion is a fairly simple one and I will not waste many words.

A disability pension is a right that should not be taken away. The pension is awarded for injuries sustained serving Canada. It would be wrong to deny this right after it has been justifiably earned.

I may say parenthetically the discretion is already there to do that but in the memory of anyone I have spoken to in the department no one can ever remember it being used. I wonder if there is really a necessity for it. Whether there is a necessity or not, we do not support the motion for the reasons I have given.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, Motion No. 10, standing in the name of the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, proposes to amend clause 48 of the bill. This amendment would have the effect of maintaining section 24 of the Pension Act, a section that the bill would repeal. So what does this section say?

The new section 24 is amended to reflect that the Canadian Pension Commission no longer exists and that all its powers will revert to the minister.

This section concerns what happens when a veteran, for whatever reason, is sent to prison. In such cases, section 24 provides that the pensioner may be subject to certain sanctions including the suspension of his pension and transfer of the pension or a part thereof to dependants. Also, upon his release, his pension will be subject to reassessment.

We must understand the principles and moral issues that are involved when we give this kind of authority to the minister. On the week-end, I heard a broadcast on veterans of the Vietnam war: how it had affected them; how they coped with their memories of the war; how they had been rejected by their fellow citizens who were too anxious to forget about this shameful period in the history of the United States; how the deep psychological wounds and the terrible burden they carried as participants in this war made it extremely difficult for them to readjust to a society that would prefer to forget all about them.

Many of these Vietnam veterans are now leading a life of crime. We cannot dismiss the thought that there may be a connection between crimes committed and their wartime service. Of course, there is no excuse for crime as such, but we cannot be blind to the fact that behaviour is influenced by past experience.

Furthermore, being punished for a crime is one thing but entitlement to a pension is something else. To link the two would be to make a moral judgment that a modern society cannot afford to make. If a crime is committed, the Criminal Code contains all the provisions to punish the crime, and the courts are there to determine sentencing. That is one thing. If a veteran applies for a pension as compensation for a disability arising from his military service, the pension review system is there to determine his eligibility and evaluate the level of compensation to which he is entitled. That is another thing.

Let me give you an example. I used to work for a large Quebec company. I worked for 35 years, which entitles me to a pension. So, if, tomorrow morning I were to commit an offence, for whatever reason, and was sent to jail, would the judge be entitled to suspend my pension? No, of course not. I am entitled to what I am entitled to. The loss of my freedom is the cost I must pay for my offence. It is intolerable to think that the Reform Party wants to keep a veteran's pension from him as punishment.

This is the absurdity at issue. A retired person is still retired, even in prison. Similarly, a pensioner who is entitled to a disability pension as a veteran is still a pensioner, even in prison. A just society would not make payment for services rendered conditional on good behaviour.

(1655)

It is as if we did not believe in our penal and our legal systems. As if we felt they did not do the job well enough and we had to compound the punishment with other penalties.

This is all in bad taste. It is the old right. I was hoping we had seen the last of a right that mixes up everything in the social contract everyone has a share in. Veterans deserve to be compensated for risking their life and for being wounded. We made this commitment long ago. It is a right, and, in my opinion, nothing and no one can take it away from them, because no one in this House can give them back their health or a limb they lost. This is why veterans have a pension. It is a disability pension.

We must not get it all mixed up and think that, because someone commits a crime, we have to take away not only his freedom but his right to a pension.

You can see why we cannot support anything so backward as Motion No. 10. We understand why the government used Bill C-67 to remove this archaic provision, which has no place in civilized society.

Government Orders

I hope veterans are reassured. As far as we in the Bloc Québécois are concerned, we will not mix their rights with any other conditions whatsoever. We therefore oppose Motion No. 10.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 10. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8) the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-67, in Clause 73, be amended by replacing line 9, on page 26, with following:

“do so on application if the person making the application alleges that an error was made with respect to any finding of fact or the interpretation of any law or if new evidence is”

He said: Motion No. 11 is an important amendment to section 82 of the bill. During the clause by clause study in committee, an amendment was made to section 32 of the bill because it was agreed by all that veterans had lost a right and that the amendment to section 32 restored that right.

Section 32 originally denied veterans the right to have the appeal panel review a decision based on the applicant's claim that there had been an error with respect to a finding of fact or interpretation of law.

Veterans could only apply based on new evidence. After being amended in committee, veterans can now apply for a review based not only on new evidence but based on a claim that an error had been made with respect to a finding of fact or interpretation of law.

Section 82 of the bill is exactly the same as section 32 except instead of referring to the appeal panel it refers to the minister. Considering the unanimous consent the amendment to section 32 received in committee, there is no reason for this bill to restrict veterans to applying to the minister for a review based on new evidence only.

Veterans should have the right to apply to the minister for a review based on the claim by the veteran that there had been an error with respect to any finding of fact or interpretation of law. I call on all members to support this important motion.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what the member had to say. I looked at his motion and I believe it is unnecessary.

If a veteran feels that the minister has made an error in fact or law at the first decision the applicant can appeal to the Veteran's Review and Appeal Board. That is why we have a quasi-judicial board in the first place.

(1700)

The hon. member compared the three levels, the minister, the review board and the appeal board. He is absolutely right, we did go back to insert the error of fact or interpretation of law at the second stage or at the review process because we felt it necessary to have it in the quasi-judicial system to equate both processes, the review and the appeal.

However, in the case of the minister the amendment makes no sense from an administrative or a policy point of view. It would not result in faster turnaround times, the litmus test of all these motions. Nor would it increase the chances of a veteran receiving a disability pension. The true safety factor for the veteran, the crux of the bill, is that he or she can claim an error of fact or law after the final decision is rendered by the new board.

This where we need this kind of safeguard, not at the ministerial level. At the ministerial level the veteran can continue to two further levels where it is important to have it written in that the veteran is given the benefit of the doubt with respect to the ability to look at, from their viewpoint, the interpretation of the law or an error of fact.

I believe the safeguard, the intent of what the hon. member is proposing, is already in place. It is an amendment which does not make administrative or policy sense. It will do nothing to help the bill. It will do nothing to reduce the turnaround time for veterans. We believe it is unnecessary and therefore I will not be able to support it.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, Motion No. 11 put forward by my colleague is aimed at amending clause 73 of the bill, which amends a number of sections in the Pension Act. The section in this act specifically targeted by the hon. member's proposed amendment is section 82 of the Pension Act.

This section deals with the minister's power to review certain decisions made in the pension award process. This power applies first of all to his own decisions relating to initial applications not under the responsibility of the new board. This reviewing power may extend to all initial decisions made by the Canadian Pension Commission until its dissolution.

Section 82 of the Pension Act also provides that the minister's review may lead to the confirmation, reversal or amendment of the decision being reviewed. However, such changes can be made only if the minister determines that there was an error with respect to any finding of fact or the interpretation of any law.

The minister may review these decisions of his own initiative, but he may also do so on application if new evidence is presented to him. It is this last part of section 82 that the Reform motion would amend. This proposed amendment provides clarification in several respects.

First of all, the amendment specifies that the decision review application submitted to the minister must come from the original applicant behind the decision. An application by a third party to review a decision under the minister's authority may not be admissible.

The amendment goes on to say that the original applicant may also, in support of his application to the minister, submit arguments to the effect that an error was made with respect to any finding of fact or the interpretation of any law. It is the same power as that given to the minister to review a decision. Therefore, we think that the original applicant behind the decision should be allowed to submit to the minister any arguments that the minister could use to review a decision of his own initiative.

Finally, with this amendment, it will still be possible to submit, in addition to arguments on points of fact and points of law, new evidence in support of an application for review by the minister. Indeed, under section 82 of the Pension Act, an applicant in receipt of a decision may ask the minister to reconsider his decision by putting forward new developments pertaining to his initial application. As I understand it, the possible reconsideration of a decision made under the authority of the minister is intended as another avenue for applicants who are not satisfied with the decision made in their case.

(1705)

This means that there are several recourses available to veterans applying for disability pension. Before even going to the new veterans board, applicants could file an application for review or appeal directly with the minister. This can be done provided new evidence can be introduced. It can also be done under the Reform Party amendment proposal if the applicant alleges that an error was made with respect to any finding of fact or the interpretation of any law on which the decision was made.

Government Orders

We support Motion No. 11, as it seems to make a great deal of sense. It gives veterans more rights, while at the same time clarifying an ambiguity no doubt created by noted legal scholars and drafting officers. This way, the reviewing powers of the minister are made clearer. Therefore, we support Motion No. 11.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 11.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions at report stage of the bill now before the House.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I believe you will find consent of the House to defer the recorded division on the motion until the time of adjournment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from May 5, 1995, consideration of the motion that Bill C-70, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Income Tax Application Rules and related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, last year the member for Calgary Centre rose in the House to raise the issue of the complexity of the tax system.

Government Orders

It is really interesting and instructive to listen to the Liberals who, in many of their speeches in the House as well as outside, tell us how everything is new and wonderful and everything is under control now that they are here. We are so pleased about that.

When I look at Bill C-70 I come to the conclusion it is everything the same as before. The old Conservative way of doing things or the old Liberal way of doing things of making the whole income tax all the less compatible with ordinary human beings gives me some sense of distress.

Last year my hon. colleague for Calgary Centre addressed the House while we were debating Bill C-27. In that speech he read the following excerpt from the Income Tax Act. I will give the House the interpretation of the Income Tax Act regarding superficial loss as presented by my colleague for Calgary Centre:

Section 54 of the act is replaced by the following: 9CO was the disposition deemed by paragraph 33.1(11)(a), subsection 45(1). Section 48 as it read in its application before 1993, section 50 or 70, subsection 104(4), section 128.1 or subsection 128(11.3), 144(4.1) or (4.2) or 149(10) to have been made—

24. (1) Section 55 of the act is amended by adding the following after subsection (3):

Notwithstanding subsection (3), a dividend to which subsection (2) would but for paragraph (3)(b), otherwise apply is not excluded from the application of subsection (2) where the dividend is received as part of a series of transactions or events in which

(a) a person or partnership—

It goes on and on.

(1710)

He raised the issue in the House during debate on Bill C-27 to put over the fact that we all know the Income Tax Act is such a huge volume of information that there is no conceivable way the average individual can possibly walk up to and address the bill or address the Income Tax Act. That was where my colleague from Calgary Centre stopped.

Today we debate Bill C-70. How things have changed in the last year since the Liberals have taken over. How many wonderful new ideas they have and how wonderfully they are bringing the Income Tax Act into line with ordinary Canadians. I see within the bill an amendment to the particular section I was dealing with a moment ago, superficial laws.

I am not a tax lawyer. I am not a lawyer. I am a taxpayer. I am not a chartered accountant. I am a taxpayer along with many tens of millions of other Canadians. I was rather hoping that with all of the words the Liberals continue to give to us, they might have lived up to the concept of tax reform.

I read this section to find the following. They have changed it. It now reads: "Paragraph (e) of the definition superficial loss in section 54 of the act is replaced by the following: (e) was a

disposition of property by the taxpayer to which paragraph 40(2)(e.1) 25 or subsection 85(4) applies".

I thank the Liberals for making it so much clearer for me as an ordinary taxpayer to understand this section on superficial loss. Of course I jest because the Liberals have done nothing to simplify the Income Tax Act. If anything they have added more layers, more things to be taken off as one would with an onion when taking it apart. They have added more layers to the onion of the Income Tax Act.

I find it rather interesting that one of the most creative thinkers with respect to taxation in Canada is a parliamentary secretary in the government. His ideas for the single tax, a proposal for tax reform, have never been approached, have never been touched by the government. I do not really understand why unless the Liberals have been around for far too long.

Taking a look at some of his concerns, he points out that when we have a taxation system so complex, first it leads to a situation in which ordinary citizens like me, like probably most of the people either reading *Hansard* or watching this on television today, are saying to themselves: "He is right, the income tax is so complicated I go to H & R Block or an accountant; I pay \$35, \$50, \$100 or \$150 to an accountant to get the job done".

I do not mean to do a disservice to accountants but the plain fact of the matter is that when ordinary taxpayers reach a situation in which the tax act is so complex, so convoluted, so completely overlaid as in the picture I gave of onions and onion rings with layer upon layer of problems, we end up with ordinary citizens at a severe disadvantage.

The problem is if we keep the complicated system we now have there will be continuing and ever widening abuse of the system. When there is a leak, when there is a problem within the tax system that has to be fixed, to come up with yet another band-aid that sits on top of the existing band-aids, we end up with the problem we presently have; people taking a look at loopholes upon loopholes and ways of getting around the system.

(1715)

There is another problem with the tax act being as complex as it is. The government is coming to the House now with a bill to enact 1994 taxation legislation when people were filing their income tax returns about a week ago. To me this smacks of an attitude problem: "We will get around to it". These ideas are imposed on Canadians: "That is just the way it is. Oh, by the way, we will get around to using the rubber stamp of Parliament later to actually enact the legislation".

This is not acceptable. The last time I looked we lived in a democracy. This act should have come before the House for debate long before people were filing their 1994 tax returns, not afterward.

Government Orders

I do not really understand why this government refuses to take seriously the concept of at least looking at a flat tax or single tax system. The major advantage to a single tax system is that we could eliminate the volumes and probably millions of words and figures, paragraphs, subparagraphs and subsections. We could get it down to something an ordinary citizen could understand. We would be able to file taxes in a way that is appropriate to ourselves and not to the demand of a government which simply says: "Sorry, that is the way it is to be". It would give us some flexibility.

With a flat tax system we would be able to treat all income the same way. One of the problems when people look at a flat tax system comes when they listen to the council of concerned Canadians and other wonderful organizations like that which do knee-jerk reactions and say with a flat tax or a single tax system, only the people at the top end with the high income will be advantaged.

Then some people unfortunately in the news media take a knee-jerk, short term reaction to that. They listen to that and accept it as being a statement of fact. They then go ahead and literally throw out the baby with the bath water rather than looking first at what exemptions there would be. They would be absolutely minimal.

The income of people who are presently working within the system and taking every advantage they possibly can with all the exemptions and exceptions would be captured. That is number one.

Number two, we would end up taking the personal exemption to a significantly higher level than where it presently is. That would mean that people at the low end of the scale who are presently in the \$12,000 to \$14,000 income area and are paying \$600 or \$700 in taxes in all likelihood would be advantaged under a flat tax system.

Number three, because of all the exemptions, just increasing marginal tax rates does absolutely nothing to increase income or revenue for the government. What happens is that we end up going back to what I was speaking of just a few minutes ago which is the whole issue of the convoluted ways people can get around paying tax by exception or by exemptions.

By coming up with a single tax it would simplify things. It would allow flexibility of filing dates. It also has the very distinct possibility of ending up with people at the low end of the scale being advantaged rather than disadvantaged.

(1720)

Does flat tax have a problem? Yes, there are some problems with the flat tax system. However, I challenge the Liberal government, I challenge the ministers of the government and I challenge the Prime Minister: If the flat tax or the single tax is so unpalatable and unworkable, why would the government of the

largest economy in the world, the United States, be looking at a flat tax or a single tax? When we continue to throw more and more convoluted regulations and logic into our income tax system, why would we not be prepared to at least strike an independent committee, even a subcommittee of the finance committee, to look at the concept of flat tax?

We know that good, new ideas are not necessarily to come from that side of the House. They might be interested to know that the Reform Party is establishing a task force on taxation. We will involve members of Parliament. We will involve political researchers. We will involve people within our party. We will get as much input as we possibly can so that when we come out the other side we will have a package which Canadians can look at.

No changes have occurred between the time my colleague from Calgary Centre brought up these paragraphs and where we are now. I am sure that if we waited for the Liberals to come up with any new ideas on the issue of taxation, we would wait a long time. Therefore, in the spirit of reform we are establishing the task force.

In addition to the task force, we will also be bringing forward in the very near future under a private member's bill a taxpayers protection act. We have spoken about that in the House. It has been spoken about in provincial legislatures, as well as during the Manitoba election campaign. We will be bringing forward a taxpayers protection act.

If Canadians want something new, if they want something different, if they have a fresh idea, the Reform Party will deliver.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), a recorded division on the proposed motion is deferred until the time of adjournment.

Government Orders

(1725)

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-54, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, the Canada pension plan, the Children's Special Allowances Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): There are 17 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-54, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, the Canada pension plan, the Children's Special Allowances Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Motions Nos. 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17 will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 1 applies to all the other motions in the group.

Motion No. 2 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 4, 13 and 15 will be grouped for debate. The vote on Motion No. 4 will apply to Motions Nos. 13 and 15.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 5, 6 and 7 will be grouped for debate but voted on separately.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 12 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

I shall now propose the motions in the first group to the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-54, in Clause 1, be amended by deleting lines 11 to 16, on page 1.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-54 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-54 be amended by deleting Clause 25.

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if there would be agreement that the motions that have been grouped together under the first group be deemed to have been read in order to allow more time for members to make speeches instead of reading the motions into the record.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-54, in Clause 35, be amended by replacing lines 20 to 25, on page 21, with the following:

"section 84(2), or, subject to the regulations, any".

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-54, in Clause 35, be amended by replacing lines 15 to 20, on page 22, with the following:

"section 81 or subsection 84(2) and may take any action in relation to any of those decisions that might have been taken by the Minister under that section or subsection, and the Commissioner of".

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-54, in Clause 36, be amended by replacing lines 40 to 42, on page 22, with the following:

"decision made in respect of an appeal under sub-section 84(2), may".

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-54, in Clause 46, be amended by replacing lines 4 to 12, on page 29, with the following:

"(2) Subsection 108(3) of the Act is".

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-54 be amended by deleting Clause 50.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-54, in Clause 53, be amended by replacing line 20, on page 33, with the following:

"53. Subsections 35(1)".

He said: Madam Speaker, I now address the House on Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Children's Special Allowances Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act.

In Motion No. 1, I propose the following amendment:

That Bill C-54 be amended by deleting clause 1.(2), which reads as follows: "Review Tribunal" means a Canada Pension Plan— Old Age Security Review Tribunal established under section 82 of the Canada Pension Plan.

This amendment put forward by the official opposition is aimed at keeping separate the appeal processes of the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Program.

Bill C-54 integrates the appeal processes of the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Program. Yet, the auditor general said in his report that the two-tiered appeal process for Old Age Security permits the satisfactory settlement of the few

cases there are. The process is simple, fast and informal, and cases are heard in the regions where the appellants live.

As for the Canada Pension Plan's three-tiered appeal process, the auditor general criticized it quite openly. So why propose to integrate both processes and use the Canada Pension Plan's process deemed deficient by the auditor general?

The government is not simplifying the appeal process in any way. On the contrary, client services will not be improved one bit with these measures.

Under clause 34, page 20, the first level of appeal of the Canada Pension Plan will become a "reconsideration". Under clause 16, page 8, the reconsideration which is presently optional in the case of Old Age Security will become a mandatory minister's review.

Under clause 35(1), page 21, the Review Tribunals of the Canada Pension Plan will be authorized to hear appeals relating to Old Age Security and, under clause 35(4), page 22, appeals that were directed to the former review committees of the Canada Pension Plan.

Finally, the Pension Appeals Board will be authorized to appoint temporary members. At the present time, someone who is dissatisfied with a decision made in accordance with the Canada Pension Plan is entitled to three levels of appeal.

(1730)

The first level appeals are directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development. The second level appeals are heard by the Review Tribunals established in accordance with the Act. Finally, the third level appeals are heard by the Pension Appeals Board.

In 1993-94, there were 23,046 first level appeals for an increase of 0.5 per cent compared to the previous year. Of that number, 83 per cent concerned disability benefits. A total of 27,077 appeals were processed during those two years.

Also, 3,300 second level appeals were filed. Of that number, 2,675 were dealt with. During the 1993-94 fiscal year, the Pension Appeals Board received 498 new benefits appeals made under section 83, chapter C-8 of the Canada Pension Plan. It heard 274 of those appeals. Moreover, at the request of one of the parties, the board suspended 55 appeals to be heard later.

The Bloc Quebecois, the official opposition, does not believe that streamlining appeals made under the Old Age Security Act and the Canada Pension Plan is an improvement. To be consis-

Government Orders

tent with the proposed amendment to Motion No. 1, I present the following amendment to Motion No. 8:

"That Bill C-54 be amended by deleting clause 25 because it combines the Old Age Security appeal process with the Canada Pension Plan appeal process".

Therefore the following clause, clause 25 must be deleted: "The definition of "Review Tribunal" in subsection 2(1) of the Canada Pension Plan is replaced by the following: "Review Tribunal" means a Canada Pension Plan—Old Age Security Review Tribunal established under section 82".

To be consistent with the amendment to Motion No. 1, Motion No. 9 should read as follows:

"That Bill C-54, in Clause 35, be amended by replacing lines 20 to 25, on page 21, with the following:

"section 84(2), or, subject to the regulations, any".

The purpose is to eliminate any reference to appeals to the Review Tribunal.

For the sake of consistency, Motion No. 10 should read:

"That Bill C-54, in Clause 35, be amended by replacing lines 15 to 20, on page 22, with the following:

"section 81 or subsection 84(2) and may take any action in relation to any of those decisions that might have been taken by the Minister under that section or subsection, and the Commissioner of".

To be consistent, Motion No. 11 should read as follows:

"That Bill C-54, in Clause 36, be amended by replacing lines 40 to 42, on page 22, with the following:

"decision made in respect of an appeal under sub-section 84(2), may".

Consistency is needed regarding Motion No. 14 to keep the appeal process separate:

"That Bill C-54, in Clause 46, be amended by replacing line 3, on page 29, with the following:

"(2) Section 108 of the Act."

Motion No. 16 also refers to appeals made under the Old Age Security Act:

"That Bill C-54 be amended by deleting Clause 50".

The same applies to Motion No. 17:

"That Bill C-54, in Clause 53, be amended by replacing line 20, on page 33, with the following:

"53. Subsections 35(1)".

I will leave it to the member for Mercier to explain the official opposition's amendment to Motion No. 3, which goes along the same lines as my proposed amendments, since it deletes clause 16 in Bill C-54, because on one hand, this clause provides for a ninety day period before appealing to the minister against a decision and, on the other hand, it states that the minister may stay payment of the benefits during the appeal process.

Moreover, I have a proposed amendment to Motion No. 12 which is in agreement with my colleague's.

Government Orders

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thought I would take the opportunity to reply to the hon. member.

(1735)

Frankly, the behaviour of the Bloc opposition on this bill has been to produce the most puzzling, curious, strange, unorthodox and bizarre set of amendments I have seen in a long time in this House.

It was not so long ago that the hon. gentleman was on his feet suggesting problems were being encountered by seniors having to make application on an annual basis to receive their benefits. The bill before us tries to expedite that by allowing for automatic renewal when we have all the information we need. But the hon. gentleman is now introducing an amendment to force people to go back to the old system of having to make an annual application again. He has stood logic on its head. He has absolutely reversed the position he has taken in the House. It is absolutely and totally contrary to the very words he was expressing in the House only a few short weeks ago. He said there was an impediment, a problem being faced. He says he does not know. He does not know. If he had understood the bill he would not be presenting such absurd amendments.

It seems he is saying now that people with spousal benefits will be required to reapply for their application, which will affect 20,000 people per year, rather than giving them the automatic renewal we propose. Madam Speaker, do you understand that? Can you contemplate the rationale, the reason the hon. member would want to impose upon people eligible for spousal benefit the requirement to constantly go back and re-engage, reapply, go through the rigmarole, go through the bureaucratic red tape? I do not understand. If he were some kind of bureaucratic *menschen* who takes great delight in having people jump through hoops, then maybe it would make some sense.

Bill C-54 is a clear example of how we have taken into account the problems faced by people over the past several years in ensuring that they can have renewals. We are now attempting to eliminate those problems, especially in the case of the spousal benefit, which is available for those who are 60 to 64.

If we have a female client whose birthday is in June, let us assume she would also qualify for the OAS, she clearly has some needs. If the motion proposed by the hon. member were accepted, that person would be forced to obtain, complete, and return all application forms to Human Resources Development around the month of December, before her birthday. We know how busy things get, how much time there is to delay.

In other words, the hon. gentleman who proposes this amendment has some kind of perverse delight in forcing people to fill out forms, go to offices, reapply, and go through all the paper work. It must be a strange form of entertainment for him, but it certainly makes no sense when it comes to healthy people. They will still get their money, but it will take longer, it will be more inconvenient, it will be more bureaucratic, and it will cost the government more money to go through the forms.

Madam Speaker, I do not know. You figure; I cannot. I simply do not understand such tortuous reasoning from the hon. gentleman that he would propose an amendment that would force people to engage in this kind of jumping through hoops simply for no reason at all. When we look at the bill with the whole range of amendments proposed by hon. members opposite, they are giving the message that they do not want to help people gain access to their old age benefits without fuss or bother.

(1740)

[Translation]

This is a clear example that there is a big mistake, that the Bloc Quebecois is proposing the wrong measures for senior citizens who are only asking for an efficient system. Yet, the Bloc is proposing, in these amendment, a process which is very complicated, very difficult and which makes no sense.

[English]

For the sake of the convenience of our seniors, especially the 20,000 women on social benefits who would want to be able to make full and complete access, not only is this amendment absurd, but it would be counterproductive; it would be against their interests. Therefore, it deserves to be defeated.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on this bill.

As our country moves into the 21st century, many significant changes are occurring, changes that are of great concern to the citizens of our country. First, the demographics are changing quite dramatically. We have an aging population. In twenty years there will be three to four workers for every retiree.

We are in a fiscal crisis. That crisis will only get worse. This government, as have preceding governments, has not had the courage to deal with that onerous problem, which seeks to sink the social programs that we have come to cherish in our country, social programs such as OAS, CPP, and UI. It is against this backdrop of crushing tax burdens to virtually every citizen that we see this bill come forth.

It is therefore with great consternation, justified as it is, that our people on social programs, the aged, the infirm, and the poor ponder their future, most of whom have indeed worked very hard to be the backbone of this country. We saw today many of

Government Orders

those members here who have fought and given their blood and their soul so that we may enjoy the freedom we have today in this the most beautiful country in the world. Some are well off but others, as I said before, just scrape by. This can similarly be said of our social programs, which are indeed scraping by also.

All the people we have spoken about who are relying on our social programs ask themselves if they will have enough to survive. This is indeed a common denominator, whether we are speaking of someone from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, or New Brunswick.

Bill C-54, an act to amend OAS, CPP, the Children's Special Allowances Act, the UI act, and so on, is conspicuous not for what it does but for what it fails to do. It is an opportunity lost as we head into the era of the implosion of our social programs, for there are no great innovative ideas in this program.

What is required is to put forth social programs on firm fiscal footing. That is not what this bill does at all. Rather, it is window dressing. While it will save the taxpayers some \$10 million, which is to be applauded, it does nothing when one looks at the overall spending of social programs of some \$80 billion.

One of the great fallacies of Canadian politics is the myth that the Reform Party is against social programs and the poor. I recently had a conversation with a member of this House who said to me "You in the Reform Party are really not for the poor at all, are you?" Nothing can be further from the truth. In fact I say that we are the only political party in the House that wants to ensure that the poor and the needy are taken care of in this country. As I said before, the opposite is true, from the barbs we receive across the way.

Every other party engages in a fiscal program that, due to its inability to get government program spending under control, crushes the ability of the government to pay for the social programs it offers to the Canadian people in a mythological fashion.

Today government spending in general is about \$120 billion. Because of the budget being put down now—and I do not lay the blame completely as the government's fault, because preceding governments have contributed significantly to it—what the Canadian public does not understand, and what has not been communicated adequately to it, is that in three years' time there will not be \$120 billion to spend, but rather \$102 billion. Where will the money be cut? Where will it be found? Those who will suffer are those who are poor. Those who are rich will not suffer because they have the money to take care of themselves. We in this party always attempt to be constructive, not merely obstructionist.

(1745)

Let us take a look at the big picture to see exactly what we are looking at. Old age security costs us \$14.4 billion every year and is rising because of the demographic changes which I previously mentioned. GIS costs us \$4.3 billion and is rising. CPP costs us \$13.2 billion and UI costs us \$19.1 billion and is rising. It is impossible to pay for that.

Therefore we in this party have always been of the mindset, and we have put forth time and time again, that we need to target our social programs to those truly in need. What is so wrong with removing the social payments from those people who are in the upper third income bracket? If we explain to the Canadian public that the money it receives is borrowed from its children and grandchildren it will be very reasonable and understand the situation cannot continue.

It is an absolute affront to engage in the generational blunder that we continue to foist upon coming generations by giving them a burden of debt which will significantly contribute to the negative environment in which they will live in the future.

Another thing we in the Reform Party wish to do is focus on the family and allow the family to take care of itself. Families are better than any government at doing that.

I ask my constituents what the biggest problem they have right now is. They are burdened with an unwieldy tax. Tax crushes their ability to take care of themselves, their children and other family members, particularly when they are in need. We should allow family members to take care of themselves. If we manage to invoke a tax decrease for them, and there are many ways to do that, they will be empowered to take care of themselves and their families.

It is interesting to look back at the early 1990s. The government of the day reduced taxes. What happened? Government revenues increased. What happened after that? The government of the day started to tax wildly; an orgy of taxation which included the GST.

When I visit the business community virtually every business person I speak to will say remove the GST. It is an unwieldy system as it stands. That money has to be found somewhere else. We do not advocate it being removed, we are saying streamline the GST, lower it, simplify it and there will be an added benefit because so much of it goes to bureaucracy in trying to manage the unwieldy taxation we have. Taxation in general, as I previously stated, is so unwieldy it is crushing the ability of Canadians to take care of themselves.

I implore the hon. minister who is here today to go to the Canadian public again. He should not rely on bureaucracy, the people who appear in committee or in his office. I ask him to go to the Canadian people. He should walk out there to ask Canadians what their concerns are. He should ask them how we

Government Orders

can improve the current situation so that the poor people of Canada and those who are bereft of hope can be taken care of. I implore the minister to do that. I know members of my party would be more than happy to help him to that end.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development was so happy to be able to hit the Bloc Québécois that he did not read correctly the amendments that we are proposing. And to be able to hit even harder and with more gusto he is taking clause 2, instead of subclause (2) in clause 1.

(1750)

The Minister of Human Resources Development who is going to speak afterwards should apologize to my colleague, the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau.

White hair is a sign of wisdom, because the amendment that we proposed is not the one that the minister mentioned. We are not opposed to speeding up the process, on the contrary. What we are opposed to, however, is senior citizens being required, without good reason, to deal with voice mail services. Yes, we are going to oppose part of these reforms, but before addressing the specifics of this bill, we have to say that it is presented as trivial, simply intended to streamline services for senior citizens or handicapped persons.

The truth is, under its trivial appearances, this bill contains provisions that we find very serious, because we believe that they open the door to abuse, and we are going to say so.

I proposed in these series of amendments that we revert to the current Act, under section 16, Reconsiderations and Appeals, because the new clause from this defender “extraordinaire” of Canada’s senior citizens introduces a 90-day appeal period where there was none.

When we talk to senior citizens, seniors of all ages, it is important to remember to give them whatever time they need. We have to remember that these people often need help and are not able to reach the public servants who could give them access to a minister or an appeal board. So, we do not agree that there should be an appeal period, particularly since it is an amendment to the old legislation and we do not see why we should go backward like that.

Obviously, under the new amendment, the minister can allow a longer period for an appeal. He will decide whether there will be one or not. Generally speaking, under this bill, the minister will have a lot of discretion, and discretion in this context does not mean that he will not announce certain things, but that he will act as he pleases.

We think that where elderly persons and handicapped persons in particular are concerned, they must have as many avenues of redress as possible. They should not have to rely on the discretion of the minister, even if he is well intentioned and says that he wants to accelerate the process. The discretion is left to any minister who, at one point, could abuse this power.

Once again, I ask the Minister of Human Resources Development to apologize for the harsh words he had for my colleague. I want him to know that he is not the only one who has ideas and that he is far from being the only one to come to the defence of the elderly. I do not want to question his intentions, but our role is to see to what excesses these amendments could lead. When one knows that the whole act is based on an application which will be handled by public servants over the phone, you have to be extremely vigilant. This is our responsibility. I would even go as far as to say that this is our duty.

(1755)

[*English*]

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Madam Speaker, our concerns with this bill as it now stands with its proposed amendments relate to a closer examination of the bill which reveals some aspects of it are contrary to the public interest because they involve a reduction in bureaucratic accountability. Our proposed amendment is an attempt to correct the most flagrant of these violations of the public interest.

I will first speak on the proposed Bloc amendments. Grouping three motions deals with a combination of two review tribunals into one. At the present time there are two review tribunals, one under the old age security and one under the Canada pension plan. Bill C-54 proposes to combine the two. The Bloc motion is against the idea.

As Reformers we are against waste caused by duplicity and extra waste of time which will result in extra costs as well. As usual, when extra labour is involved taxpayers will find themselves involved in paying more taxes. I fear in this case it will be a waste of overall tax dollars. Hence, Reform is opposed to the Bloc motion to retain the two tribunals but is in favour of creating one panel from two. This suggests a more accountable spending of our tax dollars. Hence, less government is better government as I see it.

I will digress a bit and give an example. Government is expensive. Costs rise and we have more bureaucracy. It follows that if we try to eliminate unnecessary numbers even in the Chamber we do not have to increase the numbers of MPs to have good government. If we try to decrease the numbers we are looking at a government which will be just as effective, maybe even more.

Government Orders

Let us look at some of the statistics. According to my figures the United States has about 270 million people and about 435 representatives. We have 27 million people and 295 representatives.

I was recently in the United States talking to some American citizens, asking whether they feel they had adequate representation. They told me they felt adequately represented. I am coming back to less government which we are addressing today.

If the new electoral boundaries act becomes law we will have even more representatives in the House. I am aware that my province of British Columbia stands to benefit from the increase in numbers. However, when we look at the costs of roughly \$500,000 per member for office budget, travel costs, telephone, salary, et cetera, it is an enormous cost to the taxpayer. If we can make do without that, I think we should.

If there is less government interference in Canadian lives it is more than possible Canadians will be happier. I have often heard expressed in my riding that people would like less interference by government in their lives. Consequently it follows that less government is better government. It will enable us to cut the fat.

I will use an example to help express my feelings. In March 1991 the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Senate made recommendations. In the report to the Senate and the House of Commons on matters of joint interest these recommendations include in general terms where savings could be found in five areas.

I suggested a greater collaboration between the two Houses on a wide range of matters; for instance, the Senate buses and the busses we use. We could have one system. Others included contracting out of various services, review and reduction of service levels, increased transparency of House expenditures and efficiency improvements.

Again, what am I talking about? We are returning to cost efficiency. We are returning to saving taxpayers money. I have to oppose the Bloc amendment and agree with the government one at this time, that we do condense and go to one overall body.

I make this comparison mainly to point out that wherever possible in government matters it is our responsibility as legislators to show accountability through cutting out duplication, no matter where it occurs. Taxpayers would feel we are making an effort to watch the spending of tax dollars while at the same time maintaining efficiency and responsibility.

(1800)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Could I ask the member if she is debating Motions Nos. 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17?

Mrs. Jennings: I am on Motion No. 3 right now, Madam Speaker.

In answer to the Bloc proposal, I must conclude that we should address accountability and efficiency at the same time. Reformers prefer that one tribunal should operate within the existing moneys allotted to the Canadian pension plan tribunal. I would hope the government would address the wisdom of such a move.

Under clause 46 of the bill, the government wishes to credit into the Canada pension plan account extra money from the consolidated revenue fund to help administer the Canadian Pension Plan Act. Again I stress that Reformers would like to see this new tribunal function with the existing funding it currently employs.

If Canadians are having to make do with less and work harder for less there is no reason why a government tribunal should not find ways to do the same. These are hard times we are into today. While we would like to be optimistic, it is incumbent on us to reinforce in the Canadian electorate that we do care and are sincere in addressing cutbacks. Since it is the public's money being administered here there must be some accountability in the process.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to address the issue before us. I will focus quite distinctly on the motions in this group which the Bloc is proposing.

In this grouping we have an interesting juxtaposition of Liberal philosophy where the Bloc members want to maintain the two separate boards that are conducting reviews and the Liberals are proposing to combine the two existing groups into one.

The comment I will make is appropriate to the philosophy of the government. It is looking at who is administering the programs and trying to reduce these numbers, as it is in some other bills that are floating around these days.

The Liberals are talking about reducing the number of members on the board of the CBC, and other tribunals and appointed boards. They are reducing the number of people which is a move, in most instances, that could be applauded. However, one needs to ask the question whether it is being done arbitrarily and capriciously or whether it is actually based on a fair assessment of the workload. The important factor being omitted here is how many people can do the work efficiently.

The missing question, whether talking about the CBC board, this tribunal or any of the other boards it is proposed to reduce is, has there been a rational study of the actual amount of work that needs to be done? Also, what would be the actual savings accomplished by it?

The Bloc is proposing we keep these two boards separate. To the best of our knowledge the workload these people would be

Government Orders

carrying would be such that the amendment the Bloc is proposing is not justifiable. There should be one panel instead of two. There would be a certain degree of overlap and that overlap could be avoided if we were to combine them.

(1805)

On a very broad spectrum, we need to address very carefully the administration of these social programs. As one of my colleagues already outlined, total government expenditures are some \$160 billion a year, \$40 billion of which is interest. The debt is continuing to grow. Even under the present Liberal's plan, we will still be adding \$32.9 billion to the debt.

You do not have to be a great mathematician to compute that. If you add \$30 billion at current interest rates, you will probably be adding in the neighbourhood of \$3 billion to \$5 billion a year in interest. As soon as you do that, there will be less money for social programs. It is \$160 billion total, \$40 billion of interest and interestingly a little more than \$50 billion on the four main programs of old age security, Canada pension, guaranteed income supplement and UI. These programs need to be cut as well as the administration of them.

While we applaud the government's move to reduce the number of boards that do these reviews, we are reducing the crew members on the *Titanic* as it is most surely going down. It is a small and ever so gingerly taken step in the right direction but it does not address the real problem. We need to bring down total spending in these programs. It must be done dramatically. It must be done quickly so that we do not lose it all.

I want to say one other thing. Undoubtedly the Liberals as our opposition would be declaring: "The Reformers want to cut these programs". We do not. I have said this often. How I wish that the Conservative government and the Liberal government before that one would have been diligent in managing the fiscal affairs so that we did not have this huge debt.

If we did not have a debt so large that we are obligated to pay \$40 to \$45 billion per year on interest, we would have more than enough money to look after all the needs of all of these people. The numbers declare it. It is \$52 billion for these four programs and \$40 to \$45 billion for interest.

We are talking about cutting these programs because we cannot cut the interest. It is not an option. If the previous governments would have been diligent in managing our affairs so that we would not have this debt load, we would be able to carry on with a very good solid social programs. Management is what is really critical here.

I encourage the members of the House to be opposed, with all due respect to my friends from the Bloc, to these amendments because we do achieve a small efficiency by going to a single board. At the same time I must emphasize strongly that it is not even the tip of the iceberg. It is one chip on the top of the tip of the iceberg. We are missing the whole point here.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion, the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), the division on the motion now before the House stands deferred. The vote will also apply to Motions Nos. 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17.

(1810)

[English]

Motion No. 2 will be debated and voted on separately.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-54, in Clause 3, be amended by striking out line 21, on page 2, and substituting the following:

"on the first day of the fourth month after the month in which this Act is assented to."

He said: Madam Speaker, I move this motion for reasons of fairness and efficiency, which is the proper combination we have attempted to apply throughout Bill C-54.

When the bill was first introduced in the fall of 1994 it contained provisions that made reference to April 1, 1995 as the date that notification for the application would be made for those to have the retroactivity provision reduced from five years to one year.

April 1 has come and gone. Therefore in the cause of fairness, the amendment that we moved which I will read for the enlightenment of members is that we would replace April 1, 1995 with the comment or the phrase "on the first day of the fourth month after the month in which this act is assented to". It

Government Orders

is a somewhat complicated legal way of saying that people will have three months beyond the passage of this bill in which they would be informed of the new provisions so that they would be able to make their plans and their applications.

The old age security system has had a somewhat unusual or eccentric provision which gave people five years in which to make application for their OAS. It meant that those who were able to receive advice from various experts could delay making application for tax purposes for an extended period of time. This provision brings the bill into line with other provisions of the Canada pension plan and other acts. There would be the standard one-year provision in which people could make application for their OAS. We would give them three months to make that application through the proper information circles.

We are attempting to ensure that the five-year retroactivity period is reduced to one year so there is no loophole that allows people to get a tax advantage. At the same time it ensures a proper period of information for those who want to have at least one year beyond 65 years to make application for their benefits. Therefore I recommend this motion to the House.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Madam Speaker, perhaps the minister of Human Resources Development expects that, inspired by what he said earlier, we will want to maintain April 1 as the implementation date of the act. We will support this amendment. Considering the delays which occurred, as usual, our position being a reasonable one we will support this amendment.

However, I would like to take the time at my disposal to reply to the hon. member of the Reform Party who criticized earlier our proposal to maintain the two appeal or revision tribunals, that is one for the old age pension plan and the other one for the Canada pension plan. As hon. members know, these two plans are very different. They are not financed with the same funds since the Canada pension plan is paid for by workers who contribute to its fund while the old age pension is financed by all taxpayers.

(1815)

As we know, the government's intention is perhaps to merge the two plans in some way as announced in the budget speech. We believe however that having only one board is far from being the best solution. I believe this has nothing to do with the costs linked to the board as my hon. colleague said earlier. The fact is those two boards will have to deal with cases that are very different.

Some witnesses before the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development explained to us how difficult it was for handicapped persons to be heard by the board. Unfortunately,

the model that was chosen and the merger will not be based basically on the old age pension appeal board but on that of the Canada pension plan.

We believe that their merging is not a good idea. We do not think it will lead to savings. Quite the contrary, we think that in the interests of seniors who will have to deal with a board that handicapped persons were not satisfied with, and in the interests of the handicapped who have a right to a better process than what is currently available to them, it would be better to maintain two boards and to improve the existing Canada pension plan appeals board.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, Motion No. 2 is a motion to move the start up time of the amendments in the bill. The big concern we have is that the vote on Motion No. 2 will come before the vote on most of the proposed amendments to the bill.

The position members of the House might take on this bill as to whether it should come into effect at all surely would depend on all the motions being voted on and then the House making a judgment as to whether the bill should be put into effect. In Motion No. 2 we are being asked to put the bill into effect without knowing what might be in the bill, because there are several other amendments that will then be voted on.

On that basis I suggest the method of dealing with the bill is not very logical and that the motion is not appropriately placed. I suggest the minister consider moving the motion to a more appropriate place in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion, the yeas have it.

Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 4, 13 and 15 will be grouped for debate. The vote on motion No. 4 will apply to motions Nos. 13 and 15.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-54, in Clause 20, be amended by replacing line 9, on page 12, with the following:

“sion or Statistics Canada.”

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-54, in Clause 43, be amended by replacing line 14, on page 26, with the following:

“tions or Statistics Canada, or to”.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-54, in Clause 47, be amended by replacing lines 36 to 38, on page 29, with the following:

“ment of Supply and Services or the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission;”.

She said: Madam Speaker, clause 20 is entitled “Access to privileged information” and reads as follows:

Except as provided in this section, all information with respect to any applicant or beneficiary or the spouse of any applicant or beneficiary, obtained in the course of the administration of this Act, is privileged and no person shall knowingly, except as provided in this Act, make available or allow to be made available any such information to any person not legally entitled to it.

(1820)

The next paragraph allows the Departments of National Revenue, Finance, Supply and Services, Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, Statistics Canada or Canada Post access to the information.

We do not agree with Canada Post having access to the information. We were not told, we were not explained adequately why privileged information could be available to Canada Post, especially since Canada Post, through several of its components, is now broken up, and we know the government tendency in that respect. So, in this amendment and the others, we oppose having privileged information available to Canada Post.

I must say that we hesitated and that it is with reluctance that we accept privileged information being available to the agencies or departments that we have mentioned.

We are living in an age where the danger of disclosure of private information is ever increasing due to the interconnection of government data bases and its potential consequences. In these days and ages we are running the risk of coming under the watchful eye of Big Brother, as described by a famous novelist.

Because of some arguments that were made, we concurred with the proposition, although reluctantly, and I wanted to make that quite clear. Again, a very large part of this legislation will be managed by phone. A very large portion of the information will be transmitted by computer. In this age of technology, there

is always the risk that the information will fall into the hands of people who could put it to bad use.

Consequently, we are firmly opposed to giving Canada Post access to privileged information, considering the changes made.

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this motion is the first of a set of three amendments that would remove the minister's ability to disclose limited client information to Canada Post.

I am truly surprised that members opposite have brought this amendment at report stage. It reveals a lack of understanding of the purpose of this provision of Bill C-54 and perhaps—and I underline “perhaps”—an unwillingness to prepare for the future.

The government realizes the importance of using new technologies to provide better service to Canadians. This is especially important with regard to our income security programs for seniors. The provision of Bill C-54 that the opposition seeks to delete would enable the minister, under very restrictive conditions, to release limited information about clients to Canada Post where it is necessary for the administration of old age security, the Canada pension plan, or the Children's Allowance Act, as the case may be.

(1825)

It is widely recognized that there are certain advantages to having a specialist work for us. One could hardly doubt that Canada Post is a specialist in the field of getting letters out to Canadians. This is exactly the reason for this provision.

Bill C-54 would allow the department to transmit the text of letters electronically to a Canada Post processing centre, where computers would print them and machines would place the letters in envelopes. Clients would receive information about their old age security or Canada pension benefits more quickly. The department would save money. Most people in my riding would think this is a very good idea.

Moreover, the confidentiality of the information clients provide to the government is protected in several ways. Canada Post employees are bound to maintain the confidentiality of the mail they deliver, whether they receive the mail in a red mailbox, on a street corner, or electronically by computer. Bill C-54 could never change that.

The Old Age Security Act, the Canada pension plan, and the Children's Special Allowances Act provide that it is an offence punishable on summary conviction to disclose client information to anyone not entitled to have that information. Bill C-54 even strengthens this protection by extending it from just employees of Her Majesty to any person who may have access to client information. This portion of Bill C-54 allows the government to provide service to clients more effectively and at a lower cost.

Government Orders

In spite of opposition attempts to raise the spectre of personal information being sold to those who have no rights to it, Bill C-54 actually strengthens the government's ability to protect clients' information. It is actually the opposition motion that could and would jeopardize the client confidentiality.

Canada Post is bound by law to protect that confidentiality. The opposition would have us open this up to other suppliers with the legal safeguards. Senior citizens, who would benefit greatly from the changes proposed by this bill, have a right to the facts, the correct facts. This bill would allow the government to send mail electronically through Canada Post in much the same way it currently puts letters in mailboxes.

The government is committed to finding efficiency where it can and to using new technology where possible to save money. This bill does not provide unrestricted access to information to Canada Post employees or to anyone else. However, this bill does provide adequate and even stringent penalties for illegal disclosure of information.

Bill C-54 provides sound, appropriate, and highly desirable changes to the acts governing our income security programs. We have all discussed in detail the concerns raised by the opposition, which in some way was reflected in Motion No. 4. Motions 13 and 15 seek to do the same thing to the Canada pension plan and to the Children's Special Allowances Act.

For this and many other reasons I suggest these motions be withdrawn and that all members support the speedy passage of Bill C-54.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member who spoke before me. I am very glad to hear that there are some stringent prohibitions on the use of personal information under this act; that was very reassuring. I think we all share the concern that underlies the Bloc motions we are discussing. We do have to guard against government intrusion into our personal lives, especially in an unwarranted way that is not serving our interest but is intruding upon our individual liberties.

(1830)

I was very interested in the Bloc speaker who was concerned about personal information falling into the wrong hands. That is a very legitimate concern in Canada.

I suggest the Bloc look at another bill before the House, Bill C-68, in which there is a great deal of personal information being amassed by a bill before the House, very personal questions being asked in a process of registration and determination. I suggest that if Bloc members really have a concern about personal information falling into the wrong hands they should be equally concerned about Bill C-68.

This is an issue that was properly raised. I was interested to hear the remarks of my hon. friend from the government side.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Madam Speaker, obviously, I fully support my colleague for Mercier. However, the Bloc Québécois cannot support the provisions of Bill C-54 aiming to change access to some information because the government intends to increase the number of departments, organizations or even individuals that will have access to personal information used in the administration of the acts that will be amended by this bill.

Under the previous act, that is to say the one that is currently in force, the following organizations have access to this information: the Department of National Revenue, the Department of Finance, the Department of Supply and Services, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, Statistics Canada, and the provincial authority. Those organizations can have access to that information as long as it deals with the entitlement of beneficiaries or the amount of benefit, or if their disclosure is essential to the legislation's application.

One has to be very careful, when trying to obtain personal information on senior citizens since it could be used for other purposes. We have to protect our seniors against potential abuse. The government did not prove that disclosing that privileged information was necessary and essential. The government always has to prove to senior citizens that the information collected will not be used abusively.

Governments interfere more and more in the privacy of people, as we saw recently in the Bristow case. It should be pointed out that the information provisions of Bill C-54 add the following organizations to those departments which can have access to such information: the Canada Post Corporation, a decision which we oppose; the Correctional Service of Canada; the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada; members of Parliament who intervene on behalf of applicants or beneficiaries; any other person designated by the minister as a health care professional; and the Department of Veterans Affairs, as regards the administration of the above-mentioned acts or any other federal act administered by that department.

Consequently, some information will be accessible to a larger number of departments, including Canada Post. The government claims that it is a good thing to include that corporation, on the grounds that, through the use of new techniques, it could help accelerate the processing of cheques to pensioners. It is obvious that the government is experiencing enormous difficulties solving its administrative problems. However, it has not demonstrated the need to transmit information to Canada Post.

Government Orders

Such demonstration is essential if the Bloc Québécois is to support that section of the bill. We particularly object to the inclusion of that corporation, because it is increasingly more present in the lives of Canadians. It has increasingly more information on each of us. Although the collection of that information is often necessary, the government must always justify beyond any doubt such new intrusions in the private lives of citizens.

The government feels that the changes to the disclosure provisions do not represent a major departure from the current rules. The Bloc Québécois does not agree with that statement; indeed, the communication of confidential information to the Canada Post Corporation is a major change. Even though these changes must comply with the Privacy Act, we feel that it is not acceptable to include Canada Post.

(1835)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred. This division will also be applied to motions Nos. 13 and 15.

[English]

Motions Nos. 5, 6 and 7 will be grouped for debate but voted on separately.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-54, in Clause 23, be amended by replacing lines 29 to 39, on page 15, with the following:

“23. Subsection 37(4) of the Act is replaced”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-54, in Clause 23, be amended by replacing line 15, on page 16, with the following:

“the Minister shall, unless the person has”.

[English]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-54, in Clause 23, be amended by adding after line 20, on page 16, the following:

“(5) Within the first 30 days that the House of Commons sits in a fiscal year the Minister shall lay before the House a report showing:

(a) the number of remissions and the total of all amounts remitted during the preceding fiscal year pursuant to paragraphs (4)(a), (b) and (c);

(b) the recommendation of the Minister as to the number of remissions and the total of all remissions to be made in the fiscal year under paragraph (4)(d) as a result of erroneous advice or administrative error made in the preceding fiscal year;

(c) the recommendations of the Minister as to how the number and amount of remissions under paragraph (4)(d) may be reduced.

(6) The report of the Minister shall be referred to such committee of the House that the House may name for the purpose, which shall recommend a limit in the amount of remissions that may be made under paragraph (4)(d) in the fiscal year.

(7) The Minister may not remit any amount in a fiscal year pursuant to paragraph (4)(d) prior to the date a recommendation has been made by a committee pursuant to subsection (6) for the fiscal year.

(8) The Minister may not remit any amount in a fiscal year pursuant to paragraph (4)(d) that would cause the total amount of remissions to exceed the limit recommended by the committee for that year.”

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Madam Speaker, I move the following amendments to motions Nos. 5 and 6. In Motion No. 5:

That Bill C-54, in clause 23, be amended by replacing lines 25 to 39, on page 15, with the following:

“23. Subsection 37(4) of the Act is replaced”.

In Motion No. 6:

That Bill C-54, in clause 23, be amended by replacing line 15, on page 16, with the following:

“the Minister shall, unless the person has—”.

Government Orders

He said: Madam Speaker, our purpose is not to delete this clause altogether but to amend it. The one-year period for collecting overpayments is maintained and the minister is obliged to remit the amount owing in the cases specified. Consequently, subsection 37(2) is maintained and the one-year statute of limitation continues to apply, and I quote:

(2) Where a person has received or obtained a benefit payment to which the person is not entitled, or a benefit payment in excess of the amount of that benefit payment or the excess amount, as the case may be, constitutes a debt due to Her Majesty and may be recovered in proceedings commenced

(a) at any time, where that person made a wilful misrepresentation or committed fraud for the purpose of receiving or obtaining that amount or excess amount; and

(b) in any case where paragraph (a) does not apply, at any time before the end of the fiscal year immediately following the fiscal year in which that amount or excess amount was received or obtained.

In his report, the Auditor General estimates that debts arising from pension overpayments are occurring in the range of \$120 million to \$220 million each year. According to the Auditor General, past efforts to prevent and detect overpayments have been minimal and largely ineffective. These figures appear in the Auditor General's report of 1993, on pages 483 and 486.

The Auditor General also indicated that "over 90 per cent of appeals relate to claims for Canada Pension Plan disability benefits. Over the past five years, the percentage of disability claims denied rose steadily and now stands at 44 per cent. Over the same period, the percentage of those denials that were appealed also increased, from 36 per cent in 1988-89 to 60 per cent in 1992-93. Prior-year statistics indicate that the majority of these appeals will be successful". These figures appear in the 1993 Auditor General's report on page 488.

Furthermore, the Auditor General estimates overpayments for disability pensions alone at \$35 million. A provision that would allow the minister to suspend benefits during the appeal process, together with the increase in the number of appeals justified and filed by the department, might be seen as an underhanded way to reduce the number of overpayments.

Similarly, the decision to repeal this section and thus repeal the statute of limitation of one year on recovery of overpayments must have been dictated by the government's inability to process appeals on time.

The government appears to be incapable of doing anything other than tightening its rules and increasing the number of appeals to avoid overpayment. Seniors will therefore be the victims of the government's inability to resolve its administrative problems.

(1840)

Furthermore, following the delay in issuing guaranteed income supplement cheques for seniors, which occurred near the end of April, I raised the following question in the House regarding the government's inability to manage files regarding seniors on April 27:

"Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Since last Friday, Communication Québec, MP's offices and even the PMO have been flooded with calls from obviously very concerned pensioners. According to the Consumer Help Office, approximately 258,000 pensioners will see their old age pension cheques reduced by 50 per cent.

How can the minister explain that so many seniors received or will receive this year a pension cheque not including the guaranteed income supplement to which they are entitled?"

I also asked the minister a supplementary question, which was the following:

Mr. Speaker, does the minister deny that the Department of Human Resources Development's difficulty in processing requests is creating hardship this year, mostly among seniors?

The Minister of Human Resources Development's answer was alarming, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, if in some cases there have been overpayments or problems that do not fit the regulations, of course we will be sending out these letters. But to make the kinds of exaggerated claims the hon. member has, purely to frighten and scare people, is frankly not the responsibility of a good member of Parliament.

In the May 3 issue of the *Journal de Montréal*, headlines such as "Vraie course contre la montre pour le supplément de revenu"—race against time for the income supplement—clearly expose the problems facing seniors with low incomes. They are being penalized by the government's inability to fix its bureaucratic problems.

Journalist Monique Richer mentioned in her article that people who are 65 years old or older and who did not receive their guaranteed income supplement at the end of the month of April have been lining up since the beginning of the week at Guy Favreau Complex to find out what is going on.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Québécois therefore proposes that the one-year limit on overpayments not occasioned by fraud be retained—there would be no limit in the case of fraud—so as to force the government to improve the management of the program and not unduly penalize seniors, who could have to pay back major sums a number of years after an error had been made. It would also force the minister to forgive overpayments in the following instances: when a debt cannot be recovered sufficiently quickly; when the costs of recovery are likely to be at least as high as the debt itself; when repayment would cause undue hardship for the debtor; and when the debt is the result of incorrect advice or an administrative error.

In closing, Bill C-54 provides in these instances that the minister "may" reimburse. We propose that there be no discretionary power in the above instances in order to protect the interests of seniors.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to reply to the remarks of the hon. member concerning the portion of Bill C-54 which removes the time bar on the recovery of overpayments made under the old age security program.

Let us begin by laying out the facts of the current provisions which have led the government to bring the changes contained in Bill C-54.

The fairness of our current system of income security for senior citizens is marred slightly by the fact that the programs within this policy area often deal with overpayments somewhat differently. This results in a situation which can be confusing and therefore not all together equitable.

For instance, restrictions placed on the recovery of old age security overpayments have resulted in some clients retaining benefits to which they were not legally entitled.

One such restriction is the time bar which limits the government's ability to recover overpayments to amounts received by clients in the current or immediately preceding fiscal years.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 6.44 p.m., call in the members.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

(1900)

[English]

AGRICULTURE

The House resumed from May 5, 1995, consideration of the motion.

Before the taking of the vote:

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you would find unanimous consent that Private Member's Motion No. M-314 which we have before us today be done after all the other votes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

The House resumed from May 4, 1995, consideration of the motion that Bill C-85, an act to amend the Members of Parlia-

ment Retiring Allowances Act and to provide for the continuation of a certain provision, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 205)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Epp
Grey (Beaver River)
Hanrahan
Hermanson
Jennings
Kerpan
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Penson
Ringma
Silye
Speaker
White (Fraser Valley West)—30

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Assad
Asselin
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellemare
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bodnar
Bouchard
Brien
Brushett
Bélair
Bélisle
Campbell
Catterall
Clancy
Cowling
de Savoye
DeVillers
Dromisky
Dumas
Easter
English
Flis
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guay
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Irwin
Jacob
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
Landry
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lefebvre
Lincoln
Loubier
Malhi
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McWhinney
Miffin
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Paradis

Allmand
Assadourian
Augustine
Bachand
Bellehumeur
Bernier (Beauce)
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélanger
Calder
Cannis
Cauchon
Collins
Crawford
Deshaies
Dingwall
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Fillion
Gagliano
Galloway
Gerrard
Godin
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Ianno
Jackson
Karygiannis
Knutson
Lalonde
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lee
Leroux (Shefford)
Loney
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Marleau
Massé
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mercier
Milliken
Mitchell
Murray
Pagtakhan
Patry

Government Orders

Peters
Phinney
Pillitteri
Regan
Robichaud
Rocheleau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Simmons
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Terrana
Torsney
Ur
Walker
Young —133

Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Reed
Richardson
Robillard
Rompkey
Serré
St-Laurent
Steckle
Szabo
Thalheimer
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief
Wappel

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Baker
Beaunier	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Blondin—Andrew	Canuel
Caron	Chan
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Cohen
Collenette	Crête
Dalphond—Guiral	Daviault
DeVillers	Debien
Dubé	Duceppe
Gaffney	Gagnon (Québec)
Hubbard	Keyes
Langlois	Laurin
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	MacAulay
MacDonald	MacLaren
Marchand	Marchi
McGuire	McKinnon
Ménard	O'Brien
Paré	Payne
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Rock	Sauvageau
Speller	St-Laurent
Tobin	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Wells	Wood

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the amendment as amended negatived.

* * *

LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION ACT

The House resumed from May 5, 1995, consideration of the motion that Bill C-43, an act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division at the third reading stage of Bill C-43, an act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you would find unanimous consent that the members who have voted on the previous motion be deemed to have voted on the motion now before the House. Liberal members will be voting yea.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, we will be voting no.

[English]

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, I think you will find that most of the Reformers will vote no.

Mr. Bernier (Beauce): Yea.

Mr. Althouse: Madam Speaker, I will be voting no.

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

(Division No. 206)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes	Bellefleur
Bernier (Beauce)	Bevilacqua
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Bélanger
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Cauchon	Clancy
Collins	Cowling
Crawford	DeVillers
Dingwall	Dromiskiy
Duhamel	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Fliis
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Galloway	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Ianno	Irwin
Jackson	Karygiannis
Kirkby	Knudson
Kraft Sloan	LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	Lincoln
Loney	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
McCormick	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney	Mifflin
Milliken	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Nault
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Patry	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pillitteri	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Robichaud	Robillard
Rompkey	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Serré	Simmons
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Szabo
Terrana	Thalheimer
Torsney	Ur
Vanclief	Walker
Wappel	Young —106

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Asselin
Bachand	Bellehumeur
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bouchard
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brien	Bélisle
de Savoye	Deshaies
Dumas	Épp
Fillion	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin	Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)	Grubel

Government Orders

Guay	Guimond
Hanrahan	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Jacob	Jennings
Johnston	Kerpan
Lalonde	Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Manning	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mercier	Meredith
Penson	Picard (Drummond)
Ramsay	Ringma
Rocheleau	Schmidt
Silye	Solberg
Speaker	St-Laurent
Thompson	Tremblay (Rosemont)
White (Fraser Valley West)—57	

(1915)

[Translation]

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you were to seek it, I think that you would find unanimous consent to apply to the motion now before the House the vote taken on the Reform Party amendment at the second reading stage of Bill C-85.

You would also find unanimous consent for the the vote to apply to Motion No. 3 as well as Motion No. 10 at report stage of the same bill, both standing in the name of Mr. Frazer.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 205.]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare Motions Nos. 1, 3, and 10 lost.

The next division will be on Motion No. 2. The vote will also apply to Motion No. 4.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following proposal: That all members who voted on the motion on Bill C-85 be recorded as having voted on the motion presently before the House and as follows: Liberal members are voting no.

Mr. Bellehumeur: The Bloc Quebecois will vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, I think you will find the vast majority of Reformers vote no.

Mr. Bernier (Beauce): I vote no.

Mr. Althouse: I vote no.

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 207)***VETERANS REVIEW AND APPEAL BOARD ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-67, an act to establish the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to amend the Pension Act, to make consequential amendments to other acts and to repeal the Veterans Appeal Board Act as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The first question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 12.

* * *

YEAS

Members

Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bouchard	Brien
Bélisle	de Savoye
Deshaies	Dumas
Fillion	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Jacob
Lalonde	Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Mercier	Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau	St-Laurent
Tremblay (Rosemont)—27	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Alcock
Althouse
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélanger
Campbell
Catterall
Clancy
Cowling
DeVillers
Dromisky
Dupuy
Eggleton
Epp
Gagliano
Galloway
Godfrey
Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel
Hanrahan
Harper (Churchill)
Harvard
Hickey
Hopkins
Irwin
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kirby
Kraft Sloan
Lee
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mayfield
McCormick
McWhinney
Miffiin
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Paradis
Penson
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Robichaud
Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Silye
Solberg
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Terrana
Thompson
Ur
Walker
White (Fraser Valley West)

Ablonczy
Allmand
Assad
Augustine
Barnes
Bernier (Beauce)
Bodnar
Boudria
Bridgman
Brushett
Bélair
Calder
Cannis
Cauchon
Collins
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Easter
English
Flis
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gerrard
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Grose
Guarnieri
Harb
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)
Ianno
Jackson
Johnston
Kerpan
Knutson
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Massé
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Meredith
Milliken
Mitchell
Murray
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peters
Phinney
Ramsay
Regan
Ringma
Robillard
Schmidt
Serré
Simmons
Speaker
Steckle
Szabo
Thalheimer
Torsney
Vanclief
Wappel
Young —136

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson
Beaumier
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Blondin—Andrew
Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Collenette
Dalphon—Guiral
DeVillers
Dubé
Gaffney
Hubbard
Langlois
Lebel
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
MacDonald
Marchand
McGuire
Ménard
Paré
Plamondon
Rock
Speller
Tobin
Wells

Baker
Bergeron
Bertrand
Canuel
Chan
Cohen
Crête
Davault
Debien
Duceppe
Gagnon (Québec)
Keyes
Laurin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLaren
Marchi
McKinnon
O'Brien
Payne
Pomerleau
Sauvageau
St-Laurent
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Wood

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare Motion No. 2 lost. Therefore, I declare Motion No. 4 also lost.

[English]

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that the vote we have taken also apply unanimously and in the same order to report stage Motions Nos. 5 and 6.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. member for the opposition agree?

Mr. Bellehumeur: Agreed.

Mr. Silye: Agreed.

(1920)

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 207.]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare Motions Nos. 5 and 6 lost.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 7.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that the vote on the Lobbyists Registration Act main motion for third reading be applied in reverse to the motion now before the House, as well as to Motion No. 11.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Government Orders

(Division No. 208)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Althouse
Bachand
Bernier (Gaspé)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
de Savoye
Dumas
Fillion
Godin
Grey (Beaver River)
Guay
Hanrahan
Hermanson
Jacob
Johnston
Lalonde
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Mayfield
Mercier
Penson
Ramsay
Rocheleau
Silye
Speaker
Thompson
White (Fraser Valley West)—57

Ablonczy
Asselin
Bellehumeur
Bouchard
Bridgman
Bélisle
Deshaies
Epp
Gauthier (Roberval)
Gouk
Grubel
Guimond
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hill (MacLeod)
Jennings
Kerpan
Landry
Lefebvre
Loubier
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith
Picard (Drummond)
Ringma
Schmidt
Solberg
St-Laurent
Tremblay (Rosemont)

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Assad
Augustine
Barnes
Bernier (Beauce)
Bodnar
Boudria
Brushett
Bélair
Calder
Cannis
Cauchon
Collins
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Easter
English
Gagliano
Galloway
Godfrey
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Ianno
Jackson
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
Lee
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McWhinney
Milliken
Mitchell

Allmand
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélanger
Campbell
Catterall
Clancy
Cowling
DeVillers
Dromisky
Dupuy
Eggleton
Flis
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gerrard
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Irwin
Karygiannis
Knutson
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Marleau
Massé
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mifflin
Minna
Murphy

Murray
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peterson
Pillitteri
Regan
Robichaud
Rompkey
Serré
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Terrana
Torsney
Vanclief
Wappel

Nault
Paradis
Peters
Phinney
Reed
Richardson
Robillard
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Simmons
Steckle
Szabo
Thalheimer
Ur
Walker
Young —106

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson
Beaumur
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Blondin—Andrew
Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Collenette
Dalphond—Guiral
DeVillers
Dubé
Gaffney
Hubbard
Langlois
Lebel
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
MacDonald
Marchand
McGuire
Ménard
Paré
Plamondon
Rock
Speller
Tobin
Wells

Baker
Bergeron
Bertrand
Canuel
Chan
Cohen
Crête
Daviault
Debien
Duceppe
Gagnon (Québec)
Keyes
Laurin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLaren
Marchi
McKinnon
O'Brien
Payne
Pomerleau
Sauvageau
St-Laurent
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Wood

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare Motions Nos. 7 and 11 negatived.

Hon. Herb Gray (for the Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think that you would find unanimous consent that the vote taken on the amendment to Bill C-85 at second reading be taken in reverse on the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 209)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Assad	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bachand
Barnes	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bernier (Beauce)
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bevilacqua
Bodnar	Bonin
Bouchard	Boudria
Brien	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Bélanger
Bélisle	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Clancy	Collins
Cowling	Crawford
de Savoye	Deshaies
DeVillers	Dingwall
Dromiskiy	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easton	Eggleton
English	Fillion
Flis	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Galloway
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gerrard
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Harb	Harper (Churchill)
Harvard	Hickey
Hopkins	Ianno
Irwin	Jackson
Jacob	Karygiannis
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Landry	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lefebvre	Leroux (Shefford)
Lincoln	Loney
Loubier	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
McCormick	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney	Mercier
Mifflin	Milliken
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Patry
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Robichaud	Robillard
Rocheleau	Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Serré
Simmons	St-Laurent
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Szabo
Terrana	Thalheimer
Torsney	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Ur	Vanclief
Walker	Wappel
Young —133	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Epp
Gouk	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Jennings
Johnston	Kerpan
Manning	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith	Penson
Ramsay	Ringma
Schmidt	Silye
Solberg	Speaker
Thompson	White (Fraser Valley West)—30

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Baker
Beaumier	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Blondin—Andrew	Canuel
Caron	Chan
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Cohen
Collenette	Crête
Dalphon—Guiral	Daviault
DeVillers	Debien
Dubé	Duceppe
Gaffney	Gagnon (Québec)
Hubbard	Keyes
Langlois	Laurin
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	MacAulay
MacDonald	MacLaren
Marchand	Marchi
McGuire	McKinnon
Ménard	O'Brien
Paré	Payne
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Rock	Sauvageau
Speller	St-Laurent
Tobin	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Wells	Wood

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from May 5, 1995, consideration of the motion that Bill C-70, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Income Tax Application Rules and related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that the third reading vote taken on Bill C-43, of the Lobbyists Registration Act, be applied to the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 206.*]

Private Members' Business

(1925)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion carried.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
[*English*]**AGRICULTURE**

The House resumed from May 5 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on Motion M-314.

As is the practice, the division will be taken row by row starting with the mover of the motion and then proceeding with those in favour of the motion sitting the same side of the House as the mover. Those in favour of the motion sitting on the other side of the House will then be called.

[*Translation*]

Those opposed to the motion will be called in the same order.

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

*(Division No. 210)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bouchard	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brien
Bélisle	de Savoye
Deshaies	Dumas
Epp	Fillion
Gauthier (Roberval)	Godin
Gouk	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Guay
Guimond	Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Jacob
Jennings	Johnston
Kerpan	Lalonde
Landry	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lefebvre	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	Mercier
Meredith	Penson
Picard (Drummond)	Ramsay
Ringma	Rocheleau
Schmidt	Silye
Solberg	Speaker
St-Laurent	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	White (Fraser Valley West)—56

NAYS

Members

Alcock	Althouse
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes	Bellemare
Bernier (Beauce)	Bevilacqua
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Bélanger
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Cauchon	Clancy
Collins	Cowling
Crawford	DeVillers
Dingwall	Dromisky
Duhamel	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Flis
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Galloway	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Ianno	Irwin
Jackson	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McWhinney
Mifflin	Milliken
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Nault
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Patry	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pillitteri	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Robichaud	Robillard
Rompkey	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Serré	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Szabo	Terrana
Thalheimer	Torsney
Ur	Vanclief
Walker	Wappel
Young —103	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Baker
Beaumier	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Blondin—Andrew	Canuel
Caron	Chan
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Cohen
Collenette	Crête
Dalphoné—Guiral	Daviault
DeVillers	Debien
Dubé	Duceppe
Gaffney	Gagnon (Québec)
Hubbard	Keyes
Langlois	Laurin
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	MacAulay
MacDonald	MacLaren

Private Members' Business

Marchand
McGuire
Ménard
Paré
Plamondon
Rock
Speller
Tobin
Wells

Marchi
McKinnon
O'Brien
Payne
Pomerleau
Sauvageau
St-Laurent
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Wood

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion negatived.
[*English*]

It being 7.33 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.33 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, May 8, 1995

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

V-E Day

Mr. Duhamel 12279

President of French Republic

Mr. Rocheleau 12279

National Nursing Week

Ms. Bridgman 12279

World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

Ms. Minna 12279

V-E Day

Mrs. Picard 12280

Taxation

Mr. Abbott 12280

V-E Day

Mrs. Hickey 12280

V-E Day

Mr. English 12280

National Forest Week

Mr. Serré 12280

National Mining Week

Mr. Bélair 12281

V–E Day	
Mr. Mercier	12281

National Forestry Week	
Mr. Ringma	12281

Rail	
Mr. Althouse	12281

Bill C–41	
Mr. Szabo	12282

V–E Day	
Mr. Jackson	12282

V–E Day	
Mr. Cauchon	12282

Health	
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	12282

V–E Day	
Ms. Copps	12283
Mr. Bouchard	12283
Mr. Manning	12284
Mr. Riis	12285

ORAL QUESTION PERRIOD

Job Creation	
Mr. Bouchard	12285
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12285
Mr. Bouchard	12285
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12285
Mr. Bouchard	12286
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12286
Mr. Loubier	12286

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	12286
Mr. Loubier	12286
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	12286

Telecommunications

Mr. Manning	12286
Ms. Copps	12287
Mr. Manning	12287
Ms. Copps	12287
Mr. Manning	12287
Ms. Copps	12287

Low Level Flights

Mrs. Guay	12287
Ms. Copps	12288
Mrs. Guay	12288
Ms. Copps	12288

Atlantic Groundfish Strategy

Mrs. Ablonczy	12288
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12288
Mrs. Ablonczy	12288
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12288

Working Language in the Public Service

Mr. de Savoye	12289
Mr. Eggleton	12289
Mr. de Savoye	12289
Mr. Eggleton	12289

Indian Affairs

Mr. Ringma	12289
Mr. Irwin	12289
Mr. Ringma	12290
Mr. Irwin	12290

Green Plan

Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	12290
---	-------

Ms. Copps	12290
Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	12290
Ms. Copps	12290

World Bank and International Monetary Fund

Mr. Caccia	12290
Ms. Copps	12290

Gun control

Mr. Ramsay	12291
Mr. MacLellan	12291
Mr. Ramsay	12291
Mr. MacLellan	12291

Genetically Altered Foods

Mrs. Picard	12291
Ms. Marleau	12291
Mrs. Picard	12291
Ms. Marleau	12291

Conference on tobacco use

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	12291
Ms. Marleau	12291
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	12292
Ms. Marleau	12292

Quality of drinking water

Mr. Dromisky	12292
Ms. Marleau	12292

National Defence

Mr. Jacob	12292
Mr. Eggleton	12292
Mr. Jacob	12292
Mr. Eggleton	12293

Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act

Mr. Abbott	12293
------------------	-------

Mr. Eggleton	12293
Mr. Abbott	12293
Mr. Eggleton	12293

Canadian National

Mr. Althouse	12293
Mr. Young	12293

Mining

Mr. St. Denis	12294
Ms. McLellan	12294

Points of Order

Comments by the Minister of Transport

Mr. Bellehumeur	12294
The Speaker	12294
Mr. Gauthier (Roberval)	12294

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Milliken	12294
--------------------	-------

Committees of the House

Public Accounts

Mr. Bélisle	12294
-------------------	-------

Petitions

Tobacco

Mr. Duhamel	12295
-------------------	-------

Mining

Mr. Anawak	12295
------------------	-------

Ukrainian Canadians

Mr. Collins	12295
-------------------	-------

Taxation

Mr. Szabo 12295

Members of Parliament Transition Allowance Act

Bill C-324. Motions for introduction and first reading deemed adopted 12295
Mr. Ringma 12295

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Milliken 12296

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act

Bill C-67. Consideration of report stage 12296

Speaker's Ruling

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu) 12296

Motions in amendment

Mr. Ringma 12296
Motions Nos. 1, 8, 9 and 12 12296
Mr. Mifflin 12298
Mr. Godin 12299
Division on motion deferred 12300

Motions in Amendment

Motions Nos. 2, 4, 5 and 6 12300
Mr. Godin 12300
Mr. Ringma 12301
Motion No. 3 12301
Mr. Godin 12301
Mr. Ringma 12302
Mr. Mifflin 12303
Mr. Bélisle 12304
Mr. Leroux (Shefford) 12305
Division on Motion No. 2 deferred 12306
Division on Motion No. 3 deferred 12307

Division on Motion No. 5 deferred	12307
Division on Motion No. 6 deferred	12307
Motion No. 7	12307
Mr. Ringma	12307
Mr. Mifflin	12307
Mr. Godin	12308
Division on Motion No. 7 deferred	12308
Mr. Ringma	12308
Motion No. 10	12308
Mr. Mifflin	12309
Mr. Godin	12309
Division on motion deferred	12310
Mr. Ringma	12310
Motion No. 11	12310
Mr. Mifflin	12310
Mr. Godin	12310
Division on motion deferred	12311

Income Tax Act

Bill C-70. Consideration resumed of motion for second reading	12311
Mr. Abbott	12311
Division on motion deferred	12313

Old Age Security Act

Bill C-54. Report stage (with amendments)	12314
---	-------

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Dumas	12314
Motion No. 1	12314
Mrs. Lalonde	12314
Motion No. 3	12314
Mr. Dumas	12314
Motion No. 8	12314
Mr. Dumas	12314
Motions Nos. 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17	12314
Amendment	12314
Amendment	12315
Amendment	12315

Amendment	12315
Amendment	12315
Amendment	12315
Amendment	12315
Amendment	12315
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12316
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	12316
Mrs. Lalonde	12318
Mrs. Jennings	12318
Mr. Epp	12319
Division on motion deferred	12320
Motion No. 2	12320
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	12320
Mrs. Lalonde	12321
Mrs. Ablonczy	12321
Division on motion deferred	12321
Mrs. Lalonde	12322
Motions Nos. 4, 13 and 15	12322
Mr. Bevilacqua	12322
Mrs. Ablonczy	12323
Mr. Dumas	12323
Division on Motion No. 4 deferred	12324
Mr. Dumas	12324
Motions Nos. 5 and 6	12324
Mrs. Ablonczy	12324
Motion No. 7	12324
Mr. Dumas	12324
Amendments	12324
Mr. Cauchon	12326
Amendment negated on division: Yeas, 30; Nays, 133	12326

Lobbyists Registration Act

Bill C-43. Consideration resumed of motion for third reading	12327
Motion agreed to on division: Yeas, 106; Nays, 57	12327

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act

Bill C-67. Consideration resumed of report stage.	12328
Motion Nos. 1, 3, and 10 negated on division:Yeas, 27; Nays, 136	12328

Motion No. 2 negatived on division Yeas, 57; Nays, 106	12329
Motions Nos. 7 and 11 negatived on division: Yeas, 57; Nays, 106	12330
Motion for concurrence	12330
Mr. Collenette	12330
Motion agreed to on division: Yeas, 133; Nays, 30	12331

Income Tax Act

Bill C-70. Consideration resumed of motion for second reading	12331
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)	12332

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Agriculture

Consideration resumed of motion	12332
Motion negatived on division: Yeas, 56; Nays, 103	12332