



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 138 • NUMBER 073 • 2nd SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

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

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

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1355)

[English]

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

[Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

PAUL HARRIS FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 12 I attended the Paul Harris Fellowship Award dinner hosted by the Rotary Club of Hamilton. Originating in 1980 this event is held so that the Rotary Club of Hamilton Mountain can honour local citizens for their outstanding service to our community.

In this country approximately 6.5 million people volunteer yearly and contribute close to one billion hours of their time. This translates into the equivalent of 549,000 full time jobs.

This year's recipients of the rotary award are Mae Stewart, age 91, who has been volunteering for over 65 years, and Daniel Pajek, a student who has maintained a 90% average while also volunteering within the community.

I am sure all members of the House will join me in congratulating the two winners for their contributions to the Hamilton community, and the Rotary Club for recognizing the valued work of volunteers.

* * *

• (1405)

CAGNICOURT, FRANCE

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on September 6 Cagnicourt, France will celebrate the 85th anniversary of its liberation by Canadian soldiers. The town square will be renamed to honour George McKean, a former Calgarian, who played a significant role in that battle.

The tide of World War I began to turn after the Canadians took Vimy Ridge in 1917, but the German army was determined to fight back. When the Canadians liberated Cagnicourt on September 6, 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm exclaimed, "We have lost the war".

Seven—that is right, seven—Victoria Crosses were awarded honouring soldiers for that particular battle. Most significant was Colonel Cyrus Peck, the only member of Parliament ever to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Canadians, led by this government, must do more to recognize this historic battle. We must not allow this significant Canadian event to slip away. Let us join the French and a band of veterans and their relatives from Canada to be with them on September 6, 2003.

Lest we forget.

* * *

MIDDLE EAST

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday a 23-year-old American volunteer in Palestine, Rachel Corrie, was killed by an Israeli army bulldozer while trying to stop a house demolition in the refugee camp of Rafah.

Rachel was an activist who spoke out about the Palestinian struggle. In an e-mail to her parents, she described the prevalence of gun towers and tanks, the destruction of homes and the shattering of lives. She described children touched by war and a people under constant occupation.

Rachel died because the international community and its institutions failed to protect Palestinian refugees from Israeli aggression. Although tragic, this incident is consistent with Israel's illegal conduct in the occupied Palestinian territories. On the same day that Rachel died, 10 Palestinian civilians were killed, including five children.

Canada must speak out. While American and British soldiers are ready to invade Iraq, the world continues to ignore human rights violations in Palestine.

* * *

FARM SAFETY

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farming is a livelihood for over 200,000 Canadian farm families from coast to coast to coast. Too often, however, it is also a way of injury and death.

S. O. 31

It is estimated that every year in Canada there are 130 farm related deaths, 1,200 people are hospitalized from farm related injuries and 50,000 people sustain farm related injuries requiring them to either seek medical attention or to take a day away from normal work activities. Of all agriculture related injuries, 65% of fatal injuries and 50% of injuries requiring hospitalization are related to the use of agricultural machinery. The very young and the elderly are at the greatest risk on the farm.

March 12 to 19 is National Farm Safety Week. The theme this year is "Farm Safety and Street Smarts".

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture are urging farmers and their families to think about how they can protect themselves from the possible hazards of living and working on a farm.

I too would like to take this opportunity to urge all my constituents in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and all farm families throughout Canada to continue to participate in safe farming.

* * *

DIABETES HOPE FOUNDATION

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me today to have the opportunity to congratulate the Diabetes Hope Foundation in my riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale that recently received a donation of \$1,500 from the BMO Financial Group.

The Diabetes Hope Foundation provides assistance to children living with diabetes. The donations received by this grassroots non-profit organization support young Canadians by maintaining a scholarship program, a medical assistance program, and Camp Huronda where children can experience summer fun, including sports and social activities. This foundation hosts many fundraising activities annually that support and benefit children who live with diabetes.

I would like to recognize the ongoing efforts of the dedicated volunteers and supporters of the Diabetes Hope Foundation. I encourage all Canadians to support this organization.

* * *

● (1410)

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the President of the Treasury Board admitted publicly that she did not even know the total cost of the gun registry to date. In spite of the fact that Parliament has never been told how much the gun registry has actually cost taxpayers over the last eight years, the government is demanding another \$172 million in funding.

Yesterday, six brave Liberals wrote a letter to their colleagues saying:

—we believe that the Minister's asking us to vote more money is unconscionable and hostile to the principles of parliamentary government and the interests of Canadian taxpayers.

This is an absolute disgrace. If the President of the Treasury Board does not have the courage to do her job and say no to this billion dollar boondoggle, Parliament must.

The Prime Minister is threatening to call an election if he does not get his way. The Prime Minister's continuous acts of terrorism against democracy must stop.

* * *

PURIM HOLIDAY

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Jewish people all over the world just concluded the celebration of the *Purim* Holiday, whose centrepiece is care for family, neighbours, friends and the less fortunate, a concern symbolized by the delivery of food baskets on this holiday.

I would like to express my appreciation to B'nai Brith, the Chabad community and the Ottawa Jewish community for hosting yesterday's *Purim* celebration on Parliament Hill and presenting food baskets to representatives of each of the parties.

Purim is also an omnipresent reminder of anti-semitism as the oldest and most enduring racial hatred, and of the standing threat in its wake to the survival and security of the Jewish people. It is also a reminder, in the universalist sense, of the victory of the oppressed over the oppressor, of the importance of the steadfast commitment to principle, of the courage to confront evil, to resist and to prevail.

* * *

[Translation]

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from March 16 to 22, the Quebec Association for Community Living is sponsoring the Quebec Intellectual Disability Week. The theme this year is "Believe... and grow together!"

In Quebec, approximately 224,000 people are living with an intellectual disability. Today, our society has evolved, and we do not look at these citizens the same way we did 50 years ago.

Respect for their dignity and the efforts made to promote their integration allow us to benefit from their important contributions in many areas.

I want to point out the essential contribution of those around them who provide support. This support helps improve their quality of life.

The Bloc Québécois thanks you for your important contribution to Quebec society and wishes every one of you a great Quebec Intellectual Disability Week.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

AMERICANA

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Americana, the Pan-American Environmental Technology Trade Show and Conference, is being held today through Friday in Montreal. This event has become one of the premier environmental technology events for the Americas and the world and we are pleased that Réseau Environnement has been able to organize such a valuable event.

Americana 2003 is welcoming over 10,000 participants from 50 countries in the Americas, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

[*Translation*]

The Government of Canada is proud of once again being a leading partner in this event, through the Climate Change Action Fund.

Americana 2003, with the theme “Solutions for a Healthy World”, provides Canadian environmental industries with a forum to display and promote their technological solutions to climate change.

I wish all Americana 2003 participants a great conference.

* * *

[*English*]

ORGANIZED CRIME

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the epidemic of marijuana grow ops in B.C. is a very serious concern. These are not mom and pop operations. They are controlled by organized crime.

This \$6 billion industry diversifies into the cocaine and illegal gun trade and results in the gang violence that plagues our streets. One in eight murders is connected to marijuana grow ops.

Lax sentences and open ads result in criminals flocking to the region. Surrey has over 4,500 grow ops, 6% of the households. Kids in schools sell and smoke pot.

In neighbouring Washington state first time offenders receive a minimum three month sentence. In Surrey, even after seven convictions, they still have not seen the inside of a jail and the doors of the courts continue to revolve.

The solicitor general could not have seen and smelled marijuana from his Surrey helicopter tour.

When will this weak Liberal government enact laws with teeth and allocate adequate resources and lay stiffer penalties for those involved with marijuana grow ops?

* * *

•(1415)

[*Translation*]

LA SEMAINE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 9 to 23 is La Semaine de la Francophonie organized by the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française.

This event is designed to meet the specific needs of the francophone education community. It is part of Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, which are designed to bring together all Canadians.

The theme this year is “Des racines en partage”. This theme refers to history and solidarity, as well as the importance of sharing the French culture and language and passing it on from one generation to the next.

In their schools, young Canadians will have an opportunity to learn more about la Francophonie. This knowledge will in turn help them develop a sense of belonging; they will be proud of their roots. These feelings will remain with them throughout their lives.

Through initiatives like La Semaine de la Francophonie, francophones and francophiles preserve and ensure the future of their language and culture. I strongly urge Canadian schools to participate in these celebrations.

* * *

[*English*]

IRAQ

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's position on Bush's war in Iraq is typical Liberal doublespeak. On one hand the Prime Minister has been saying that Canada will not participate. On the other hand the Liberal government has authorized over 100 Canadian troops serving in exchange programs with British and American units in the Middle East to participate in combat, if and when those units invade Iraq.

The Liberals seem to be the only people on the planet who think that authorizing troops to participate in combat means we are not participating. Canadians from coast to coast to coast have told the government that they do not support this U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Rather than listen to and respect the views of Canadians, the Liberals are saying one thing and doing the opposite. The majority of Canadians do not want our soldiers involved in this conflict. The honourable thing to do now is for the government to live up to its promise not to participate and call our exchange forces home.

Finally, I invite all members of the House, the people of Canada and people throughout the world to pray for all the men, women and children who most surely will be injured or killed as a result of this unnecessary war. Let us pray for peace and understanding. At this point that is their only hope.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

JEAN-FRANÇOIS BISAILLON

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, we mourned the passing of Jean-François Bisailon, a man who had spent several months working in my office on the Hill, when I was chief whip for the Bloc Québécois. Not yet thirty, he was tragically cut down in the prime of life and leaves behind his wife, three young children, his parents and two brothers.

At the time of his death, in a terrible car accident, Jean-François Bisailon was working for my hon. colleague for Marguerite-d'Youville, François Beaulne. Passionate about politics and eager to serve his fellow citizens, Jean-François had decided to get involved in the executive board of the Association du Bloc québécois de Verchères—Les-Patriotes as a youth representative, before briefly dabbling in municipal politics in Ste-Julie during the 2000 elections.

We will cherish the memory of a discreet, almost self-effacing man, who was so very talented, friendly, dedicated and ready to help. He was a computer whiz, a very proud Quebecker, and everyone's friend. His easygoing smile and great personality will be sorely missed.

My hon. colleagues in the Bloc Québécois join me in offering our sincerest condolences to his family.

* * *

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am dismayed by comments from a member of the official opposition concerning the impending war in Iraq. During this period of intense emotion, it saddened me that a Canadian Alliance member resorted to a blanket statement that mocked the pain and suffering of other people.

Yesterday the member for Calgary Southeast stated on national television that the ethnic cleansing that took place in the former Yugoslav republic was modest compared to the atrocities committed by Saddam Hussein.

The horrors committed by any government against their own people in no way gives anyone the right to mock the human suffering of others, be it in the former republic of Yugoslavia or elsewhere. The hon. member's comments go beyond respectable political debate. They are reprehensible, unfortunate and shameful.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, while we may not yet know the full economic impact of a U.S.-Iraq war, one thing is certain. The U.S. will tighten its borders and everything that flows through crossing points will undergo higher scrutiny.

We know that agricultural products, consumer goods and softwood lumber, before the trade minister bungled that portfolio, are among the key components of a \$1.5 billion a day trade relationship. As of noon today, border delays are well over three

hours long. The Deputy Prime Minister had better hope that the U.S. does not clamp down even more once hostilities begin tonight.

Yesterday in response to my question, the Deputy Prime Minister said that he had spoken to Tom Ridge. Well, did he speak to his answering machine? Today we see that nothing has been done to ensure Canadians will have continued access to the U.S. and its markets. We have seen that nothing has been done to ensure that the U.S.-Canadian border does not become a casualty of war in Iraq.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

● (1420)

[English]

IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Prime Minister to concede that the only way now to avoid war and for the good of Iraq and everyone else, Saddam Hussein should leave office before the deadline.

Instead the Prime Minister defended Saddam Hussein's right to power. He said, "In the present system, it is for the local people to change the government". I do not know what the Prime Minister has in mind. Does he expect Saddam Hussein to have a truly democratic election?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the debate has been on elimination of the armament of massive destruction. The resolution of the United Nations was on that too. It was not for a regime change.

When we went to Kosovo, it was not for a regime change. It was to stop the genocide. Milosevic was replaced by his own people when he was defeated at the election.

Therefore the debate is about disarming Saddam Hussein. The process was working. The Americans felt that it was not working fast enough. We disagreed with them and we took action in consequence.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Milosevic was removed, as the Prime Minister knows, only after bombs started falling on his country.

Saddam Hussein kills all opponents, both individually and through genocide. The Prime Minister knows he authorized military action in Kosovo without a United Nations resolution. He said it was to stop genocide. He said it was for humanitarian purposes. Saddam Hussein has killed tens of thousands of his own people.

Does the Prime Minister not believe that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the people of all of Iraq?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think at this moment it is the same situation because the question of when he committed genocide against the Kurds with chemical armament at one time, it was at the beginning of the 1990s.

I am going back. I said the United Nations has never debated the change of regime. Why not change the regime in North Korea? Why not change the regime elsewhere? We will never stop. The question is that—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): All I can say about that kind of answer, Mr. Speaker, is we cannot change the regime here in Canada quickly enough. Yesterday the Prime Minister said—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stephen Harper: Well, the Liberal members want a change.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I realize regime change is an important topic of discussion and one that generates some enthusiasm on every side but we have to be able to hear the question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, I got that line from the member for LaSalle—Émard.

The Prime Minister has said that Saddam is currently contained and that this containment is working. He knows that Saddam is contained by a quarter of a million allied troops, British, American and Australian, at his doorstep.

Does the Prime Minister really expect these troops to stay there indefinitely and if this strategy was working, why was his government not participating in it?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, talking about change of regime, they did that in the opposition and they went from 25% to 9% in the popular vote.

Mr. Stephen Harper: My caucus did not force me to resign.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, they do not want to have an answer, so I will not reply.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Holocaust survivor and renowned human rights activist, Simon Wiesenthal recently said the following:

[The allies] do not seek to conquer Iraq but rather Iraq but rather to confront a dictator who has used weapons of mass destruction and committed genocide against his own people...Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, but for six years the world did not act. Has he been taken seriously then, the lives of innocent millions may have been spared.

Why does the Prime Minister seem so obsessed with not offending Saddam Hussein and leaving him in power?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition wants to have a different debate than the real debate. The debate was to disarm Saddam Hussein. We think he has to be disarmed. Resolution 1441 was not on a change of regime. It was on disarmament. The process was on its way to being realized. The Americans decided that it was not proceeding fast enough. They decided to go.

We said that we would not be there unless there was an approval by the United Nations. There was not such a thing. We said that a year ago and we repeated the same thing on Monday.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, because of disarmament the world is witnessing a global realignment of nations, a new geopolitical divide.

The Prime Minister's decision to not support UN resolution 1441 puts us in the camp of nations like Libya, Syria, Iran, communist China and Cuba, and not on the side of our historic allies like Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, the United States, Spain and the new democracies of the new Europe.

Why does the Prime Minister think that the economic and strategic interests of Canada will be enhanced by clearly placing us on the wrong side of this new divide?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is an independent country and Canada made a decision on behalf of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the work of the Canadian government is not finished as regards the Iraqi issue. The Prime Minister made the right decision when he announced that Canada would not participate in the war against Iraq, but he must go further. In this sense, his commitment to review the proposal made by the Bloc Québécois is encouraging.

Since time is of the essence, I want to know if the Prime Minister instructed the Canadian ambassador to the United Nations to immediately ask the UN General Assembly to address the Iraqi crisis?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Security Council met this morning. It is pointless, at this time, to submit that proposal. The Security Council is aware of the problem and it is up to it to decide whether or not it wants to refer the matter to the General Assembly.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Security Council is deadlocked. Resolution 377 was used for the first time when the Suez conflict had already begun and France and Great Britain were present on the theatre of operations. I believe it is the United States that used it.

Should we not do the same thing now? Considering that there is this impasse, even if the war began in 12 hours, could Canada not play a constructive role for peace by asking the General Assembly to act as the second line, after the Security Council, in the promotion of peace?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past three weeks, we have worked very hard, harder than any other country, to try to solve this issue. We did everything we could.

As I said, right now, the Security Council is in session. At least it was this morning, and it is up to it to decide, given the existing impasse, whether it should refer the matter to the General Assembly.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in expressing support for the Uniting for Peace resolution 377, Lester B. Pearson said the following on behalf of Canada:

It has always been the view of our delegation that the Assembly should be a second line of defense for the security of members of the UN.

Oral Questions

Does the Prime Minister not think that the situation is sufficiently serious to require recourse to that “second line of defense”?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said, the matter is now in the hands of the Security Council. Some of the countries in New York are seeking to bring the matter before the General Assembly.

Canada will do its job. It will go before the General Assembly. It will participate. We will continue our efforts toward securing peace, if that is possible. Even today, we are continuing our efforts.

• (1430)

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we want to urge the government to address this matter more rapidly.

According to yesterday's *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

Iraq is a test case for a new Bush Doctrine to police the world and remake it in our image.

Does the Prime Minister not feel it is urgent for the countries of the world joined together by the United Nations to address this crisis?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what has guided us in recent weeks. The Prime Minister and the entire government have been working precisely to that end: to work within the UN context and with other countries in the world in an attempt to avoid war if at all possible.

Contrary to the wishes of the Canadian Alliance, which was absolutely intent on rushing into war, we have presented a proposal. We have presented a proposal to avoid war, and we are continuing our efforts to that end.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister was very clear when he said to the House that Canadian Forces personnel in the gulf would not participate in the war on Iraq, and yet it appears that the Minister of National Defence may have another opinion because he is reported to have said that Canadian warships will escort U.S. and British vessels sailing up to the northern edge of the Persian Gulf to wage the war on Iraq.

Could the Prime Minister tell us who is speaking for the government? Is it the Minister of National Defence or the Prime Minister when he was so very clear yesterday?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ships that are there have a task in relation to the Operation Apollo program. They are there to protect the circulation of ships in that part of the world so the Canadian troops that are in Afghanistan or that will be going to Afghanistan, and other people who want to deliver goods and services to the people operating in Afghanistan, can go to a port in that area.

Our troops are there and will remain there to help in the Apollo program for the good of the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many people applaud the Prime Minister's decision but they will not be applauding if they find out that the Prime Minister is trying to have it both ways.

Could the Prime Minister ask the Minister of National Defence to tell us what the new rules of engagement are to make sure that Canadian Forces personnel in the gulf do not do what the Prime Minister has said they will not do?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they have their rules of engagement, which we have given them, to do exactly what they are doing. We did that months ago and we do not have to change what is already clear.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, in the 1995 referendum campaign in Quebec, the Prime Minister said “don't worry, don't prepare, wait”, and then he nearly lost the country.

Yesterday, with a war hours away, this head-in-the-sand Prime Minister said “before working on reconstruction wait for the war to start”. Other countries are not waiting. The Canadian Red Cross is not waiting.

How many bombs must fall? How many Iraqis must die before Canada uses our undoubted influence to put the United Nations in a position to lead any reconstruction efforts?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on these programs Canada is always one of the first to move. Already at the United Nations the Canadian delegation is talking with the authorities to make sure that we will be participating in the program when the need arises.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, that is some progress from yesterday.

On Monday afternoon the Prime Minister finally announced a policy on Iraq. Monday night the foreign minister said “that is Canada's policy at this time”.

Yesterday the minister said “Our position has to reflect the reality on the ground at any one time”. That can only mean that the government is prepared to change its policy again.

Will the Prime Minister tell the House if there are circumstances in which Canada would change the position the Prime Minister stated on Monday and, if not, then why is the foreign minister saying that this is a policy only for this moment, this time?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will not be this time. For me we have a policy. Our policy is so clear that we were the first ones in the spring of last year to say that we would not participate in a war in Iraq without the approbation of the Security Council.

We have been very clear from the beginning. It is the leader of the fifth party who is always confused.

* * *

• (1435)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in 1998 Canada asserted the independence of our foreign policy when we refused to allow a Russian veto at the UN to stop us from acting in Kosovo. However, today the government has sacrificed the independence of our foreign policy to a threatened French veto against implementing 1441.

Oral Questions

How exactly can Canada still claim to have an independent foreign policy when we allow the Elysée Palace in Paris to dictate our actions? Is it now the position of the government that Canada will never again act to protect international security if a veto is threatened by a permanent member?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit presumptuous to say that Canada will go and tell the Americans to use or not use their veto, the French to use or not use their veto, the Russians to use or not use their veto, the Chinese to use or not use their veto or the British to use or not use their veto.

It would be very different if we had that power but, unfortunately, we do not have that power. Usually they make their own decisions.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in 1998, and we ignored them, rightly, but today Saddam's Baath regime in Iraq has killed more than 100,000 of his own citizens. He would have killed thousands more were it not for the no fly zones being operated by U.S. and U.K. forces without a UN mandate.

Is the Prime Minister telling us that Saddam's regime is not a humanitarian disaster, does not pose an immediate threat to the Kurd and Shiite population and that they would face imminent disaster were it not for U.S. and U.K. military action today?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. The government's policy has always been clear. Many governments around the world do not conduct themselves in ways in which we approve. We have fundamental disagreements with many governments around the world. I can name many in the House, Zimbabwe for one and others. We have mentioned them in the House.

What the Prime Minister has clearly said and what the government has said is that we have created an institution to manage these relationships. We have created a world system that justifies intervention in certain circumstances.

We chose not to intervene in these circumstances because we have a principled position and conditions which justify it. We will stick by our position and not be driven off by these false analogies.

* * *

[Translation]

IRAQ

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Spain, which supports the U.S., is not sending any combat forces to Iraq. Oddly, Canada, which refuses to support the U.S. in its unilateral decision, has sent troops and military equipment. It makes no sense.

Should Canada not try to be consistent like Greece, which is withdrawing its frigate, and withdraw its troops and equipment from the region?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister and my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, just explained, it is clear that Canada does not agree with the U.S. when it comes to Iraq. The Bloc Québécois needs to understand that on other issues, the U.S. remains Canada's friend and ally. We have an agreement on the joint defence of the continent, on the war against terrorism, and this war is also taking place overseas.

The Bloc Québécois needs to understand that Canada is proud to be in the gulf to fight terrorism with its ships.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister keep saying that Canada's military resources are being used in the fight against terrorism. Yet some of the foreign ships that will be escorted by Canadian ships are in the region to go to war.

No matter what the Prime Minister says, Canada's presence is not neutral. What is Canada waiting for to follow Greece's lead and withdraw its ships and troops?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member seems to forget that France is part of this group of ships against terrorism.

Furthermore, we are proud to be part of this defence against terrorism here or anywhere. We are working with France and other countries to achieve this goal, which is very important for Canada.

* * *

● (1440)

[English]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have decided to stand with France regarding the situation in Iraq instead of with our largest trading partner.

Yesterday the U.S. increased its domestic security by advising the Canadian government that it was going to immediately implement the entrance and exit requirements at all the southern Ontario borders.

Why is the government jeopardizing millions of Canadian jobs that depend on exports to the United States?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the American government announced that in terms of its own national security. Whether we had joined them or not in an action in Iraq would have made no difference in that decision. That decision is in relation to who goes across the border or not. These are two completely separate issues.

An attempt by the opposition to confuse the Canadian people in a way that makes it look as if we are losing influence with our American colleagues is just playing into their hands. It is cheap politics in an attempt to disparage the government instead of looking at the real interests of our country.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government has constantly antagonized the current American administration with its anti-American comments and policies. Defence suppliers are being asked to transfer production to the United States because of Canada's opposition and the potential delays at the border.

How many more Canadian jobs is the government prepared to lose because of its anti-American policies?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member pretends that we are not doing well in terms of jobs in Canada. She has given me the opportunity to say that Canada created more than 560,000 new jobs last year while the Americans lost 200,000.

* * *

[Translation]

IRAQ

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence announced yesterday that he would be withdrawing officers from the unified command in Qatar because they could possibly take part in the conflict in Iraq and that he did not want that. However, the soldiers that are integrated with both American and British combat units will be directly involved in combat.

Why remove officers so that they are not involved in combat, and let soldiers remain involved in combat?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason we are reducing the number of persons we have in Qatar is because Canada will not be sending an army, or aircraft or other forces for the war because we are not taking part in this war, as the Prime Minister said.

The reason there is a small number, some 30 personnel, in non-combat roles is because there is a decades-old tradition of exchanges with our allies, and this will continue.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the circumstances are exceptional. The officers who leave the unified command will no longer be there, in a way, for the Canadian soldiers that have been integrated with combat units.

My question for the minister is as follows: since he believed it was wise to withdraw the officers, how then, using his own logic, can he explain leaving soldiers there, with no one responsible for them, and under the sole authority of American and British officers? That is the problem his decision has created.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, I think it is the member opposite's logic that leaves something to be desired.

For decades now, we have taken part in exchanges with our allies, Britain, the United States and others. When these soldiers are with British troops or American troops, they are under British or American control. Therefore, there is no need for Canadian officers. However, ultimately, these soldiers are under the control of the Government of Canada.

* * *

•(1445)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that is cold comfort to those people.

A military report last night has stated that our 40 year old Sea Kings lacked the appropriate night vision sensors required for their

missions. Consequently, they have been unable to complete their given tasks while enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq and during Operation Apollo. In fact, our Sea Kings have even been excluded from participating in night operations with the U.S. navy.

I would appreciate it if maybe the minister could focus his dim vision on this problem right now. Why does the Liberal government continue to send our Sea Kings into missions it knows they simply cannot perform? Is it bad judgment or simply bad politics?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Sea Kings have performed admirably in the region. They have carried out 2,000 missions in Operation Apollo in the gulf. As I have said a number of times, they have done approximately one-half of the hailings—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I know that certain hon. members like to assist the minister by providing words to include in his answer to questions, but the minister seems quite capable of doing this on his own. And while I am sure he appreciates the offered assistance, we must be able to hear his answer. When members make so many suggestions at once, the Speaker cannot hear.

The Minister of National Defence has the floor. We want to hear his answer.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, as I was attempting to say, we have approximately 10% to 15% of the assets including helicopters in the region and we have done literally half of the hailings which are done by helicopters, and the boardings which are done by sailors from ships.

I would say that our navy including the helicopters have performed in an exemplary fashion.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we know that those are dangerous missions and they simply are not equipped. Because of the Sea Kings' inadequate sensors, our choppers have to fly close enough to unidentified ships to read the writings on their sides. This leaves our crews wide open to being shot down.

It is high time the Prime Minister read the writing on the wall in great big letters. He had the opportunity to replace the Sea Kings 10 years ago. When will he admit that trying to save his political face could cost military lives?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the lives of our helicopter pilots are extremely important to the government and to Canadians, so it would be a good idea if the hon. member would get her facts straight. They do not move close to the ships as she claimed. They stay always within five miles from the ships. Indeed, their night vision equipment is in the process of being upgraded.

This morning I had the opportunity to speak to three helicopter pilots who explained to me these procedures and how their operations were indeed entirely safe.

*Oral Questions***PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Leading associations advocating for persons with disabilities and their families have been raising concerns about access to the disability tax credit. What steps is the government taking to address the serious concerns of Canadians with disabilities?

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has an attitude of gratitude for those individuals who contribute to the public policy process of the government. The budget more than doubles, from \$600 million in 1996 to \$1.3 billion, annually the tax relief for persons with disabilities.

We have a new child disability benefit of \$1,600, which will help over 40,000 families with children who are disabled. As well, we have established a technical advisory committee to review tax measures for persons with disabilities. It is clear to me that the government not only listens but also acts.

* * *

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the situation at American-Canadian border crossings is getting worse with the tightened security measures from the United States. We are seeing traffic tie-ups and delays threatening businesses and putting municipalities in very tenuous situations. We know right now that the Deputy Prime Minister said we are entering a period of some uncertainty. The municipalities are already reacting by putting emergency measure plans in place. What we do know for certain is that they will be incurring more costs.

The government does not have a good record with municipalities, but will it show leadership right now and will the Prime Minister support financially those municipalities that will have to face the cost coverages for these emergency measure plans?

• (1450)

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have some information that I would like to share with the member regarding the situation at the border.

Ambassador Bridge is one of our busiest and very important commercial border crossings. He might want to know, and the members of the House might want to know, that at the Ambassador Bridge there were 15-minute delays yesterday and there was a consistent 120-minute delay all day today. At the Windsor-Detroit tunnel there was a 5-minute delay yesterday evening, 45-minute delays at 8 a.m., and 30-minute delays since then.

We have been working very closely with the Americans to ensure that commerce keeps moving as best it can during this stressful and difficult time.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not reply at all to the member's question.

Not only are border communities facing enormous difficulties, but individual Canadians are facing harassment, racial profiling registration, and now the new visa requirements by the U.S. Even Canadian citizens who cross the border daily to go to work in the

U.S. are facing interrogation when they return by Canadian officials no less.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: Why is the Canadian government not standing up for the rights of these Canadians and making it clear that we will not tolerate state sanctioned racial profiling and harassment of Canadian citizens and residents?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of National Revenue pointed out, these are stressful times. The point is that we work in stressful times together with our American colleagues to solve these problems. At every level of government, whether it is the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary Ridge, Secretary Powell and myself, or any other of our counterparts, every minister in the government works with his or her counterpart in the American administration.

We are reducing delays and friction at the border. We have the best relationship with the American government than any other country in the world. We will continue to work on that and we will assure it for the benefit of Canadians.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Last February, David Lutz, a Hampton, New Brunswick, lawyer told all his staff to become members of the Liberal Party to protect his firm's lucrative contract with the federal Department of Justice. In a memo to staff, of which I have a copy, Mr. Lutz wrote:

...our number one client here is the Federal Department of Justice. We keep this business as long as John and I maintain high profiles in party activities.

I ask the Prime Minister: Is it his policy for the government to award contracts based on party involvement and not on who can or has the ability to do the job?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Justice Canada has outside counsel, not only in that part of the country but across the country. We have an established policy. We look at the quality of the services, the expertise of the law firm, and the lawyers involved in the case. We then proceed to give out those mandates.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday and today in the House, the Prime Minister made it very clear that changing regimes in different countries is not a policy that is desirable at any time. However, at the same time, media reports state that the Canadian government is spearheading a plan for a regime change of President Aristide in Haiti and even set the deadline of January 1, 2004.

If the government supports regime change in Haiti, how can the Prime Minister say the government does not support regime change?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a newspaper report concerning a meeting that took place. Our embassy in Haiti issued a clarification and made it very clear we are not engaged in any way in trying to change the regime in Haiti.

However, we are engaged in what we always have been in Haiti: working for democracy, working for human rights, working for the betterment of the Haitian citizens, and working for a way in which we can restore a semblance of order in the Caribbean for the benefit of Caribbeans and Canadians. We will continue those efforts.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Assistant Auditor General Hugh McRoberts has taken the extraordinary step of urging DND to base its long delayed maritime helicopter replacement on best value. Apparently he is concerned that political interests will again trump proper procedures here.

Will the Minister of National Defence confirm today that his department will use best value, not just buy the cheapest thing that comes along?

• (1455)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since I have already answered that question a thousand and one times, perhaps I might clarify to the leader of the NDP that he misquoted me. What I in fact said was that when we are defending the ships of our allies in the region there might not be time to ask the commanders of the ships what their destination was when those ships were under attack and we were coming to their defence.

The answer to the question is that the government has been engaged in speeding up the delivery of the helicopter by moving from a two contract system to a one contract system. Indeed we are doing everything we can to make that delivery as—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): You are absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. What the heck was that? He is always one step behind, now he confirmed it. The only thing the minister has confirmed here today is that when a Sea King dumps onto the deck of the *Iroquois* it is called hailing.

After 10 years of claiming it is a Liberal priority, the only movement we have seen on that file is downgrading of the requirements to the point that the 40 year old Sea Kings we have would qualify as a winning tender. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker.

Would the public works minister guarantee that the contract he signs off on will be one based on best value, not on these cheap political requirements?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is working particularly hard to move this matter forward. The Minister of National Defence took some very important steps at the end of last year with respect to the bundling issue. We are waiting for further steps to be taken this

week and next week. We are anxious to move this forward rapidly and to achieve the very best possible result for Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, more than 400 producers from Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay met in Alma to demand concrete action by the federal government, which has abandoned them. Dairy substance imports, the discontinuation of subsidies and the low increase in milk prices have resulted in dropping incomes for them.

Last summer, at the federal Liberal caucus in Saguenay, the Minister of Agriculture promised to set up a task force on supply management. Seven months later, can the minister share with the House the task force's findings?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during our caucus in Saguenay last August, the Minister of Agriculture and myself did set up a task force in conjunction with the dairy producers and the departments of Agriculture and International Trade. Working meetings have taken place between our officials and milk producers.

We received the report a few days ago. I have already had a working meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, and we will soon let make our decisions known.

Milk producers know full well that this government has always defended the supply management system and that it will continue to defend the interests of milk producers, who greatly benefit from an excellent system that we have put in—

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

Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister must understand that for half of the milk producers, revenues are not enough to cover production costs.

What is the minister waiting for to take action to allow producers to have a decent standard of living?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in all the meetings we have had with them, milk producers have told us that what matters most to them is to have a supply management system, a system that this government introduced some 30 years ago.

More than half of the quotas are held by Quebec milk producers, who benefit from the system we have put in place. We will continue to defend and promote it, because it is also in the best interests of consumers.

Oral Questions

[English]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, another GST fraud revelation gives a new meaning to being on the lam. A former Toronto resident, Charles Lam, has escaped to a life of luxury in Hong Kong after setting up 190 bogus companies to collect hundreds of thousands in GST money.

His ability to move in and out of the country and commit crimes within Canada shows how the government treats security threats and tax fraud. Why has the government failed to adequately stop Charles Lam in his tracks?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the case that the member opposite refers to dates back to between 1992 and 1994. By the way, that was at the time when his friends in the fifth party had actually just brought in the regime, which we have since that time significantly improved, I would say.

I can tell the member opposite that even if a person has left the country we are able to use extradition laws to pursue them, and we continually improve, and try to regain any of the funds that anyone defrauds from the Canadian government.

• (1500)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, 10 years later the government has still not been able to catch this guy or do anything about it. That is just incredible.

The truth is, Charles Lam continues to live the high life on taxpayers' money and the minister's utter failure to stop him and other cases of GST fraud is atrocious. Her unwillingness to do anything about it shows she just does not care. In fact, her appearance later today at the public accounts committee comes only with her kicking and screaming. Will the minister finally commit CCRA to reporting GST fraud in the public accounts as losses and not write-offs?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the House are supposed to be accurate in what they say. The member opposite cannot on one occasion show where I have not said that I would be happy to appear before a committee of the House. I have always been forthcoming in answering questions from the member opposite, and frankly, I think it is unbecoming of him on this day when I am appearing before committee happily to answer his questions for him to ask a question which frankly is insulting.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the former health minister tried to justify hiring Joanne Meyer through a Ferrari restoration company on the basis that she was the best person for the job. That reminded me of the former solicitor general and we all know where he is sitting now.

My question for the former health minister is, since Joanne Meyer had a contract as JM Enterprises, why did she not get that contract directly rather than through this auto restoration company?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I have been advised that no one is questioning the quality of the work done. As I have said before in response to the hon. member's questions, Health Canada officials are gathering the facts in relation to the contract in question. I look forward to receiving those facts when that work is finished.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I seem to be able to gather the information quite quickly. I just wonder, with the thousands of employees in the Department of Health, why they cannot look at the old ministerial budget of the former health minister.

I ask the question again. Since this individual had a contract under JM Enterprises, why did she not get the contract directly there rather than through an auto restoration company? It is a simple question. We need a simple answer.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me give a simple answer, and an answer that I have given before in the House, which is very simply that my officials are gathering the necessary facts around the administration of the contract in question. I look forward to receiving those details.

* * *

[Translation]

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Coast Guard has decided to stop paying to have the St. Lawrence dredged, although it continues to pay to dredge the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg and the Fraser River in the Canadian north.

How can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans justify such a decision that treats Quebec differently and is extremely detrimental to Quebec's ports?

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada decided some time ago that the Coast Guard would no longer be responsible for dredging, except where an international treaty exists, as in the two cases referred to by the hon. member.

With regard to the St. Lawrence, under an agreement with the shipping industry we are the main contractor, but the costs were being borne by the industry. A new agreement is currently being negotiated.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs just said that a correction was issued to the very clear accusation that Canada was leading an effort to overthrow President Aristide. What did the correction say and will he table the minutes of the meeting that was held?

Points of Order

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since that matter was a matter that was presided over by the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, I think it would be more proper for the member to address his question to him as to what took place at the meeting, but I would be quite happy to table in the House the statement issued by our embassy in Haiti.

* * *

● (1505)

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Order, please. I wish to inform the House of the presence in the gallery of four Canadians who were awarded the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal today.

[English]

They represent 75 Canada Customs and Revenue employees from across Canada who volunteered to serve in a United Nations peacekeeping mission based in Macedonia in the early 1990s. They are: Mr. Michael Bosson, Ms. Linda Chemish, Mr. Ed Hart and Monsieur Robert Laquerre.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1) I wish to table a notice of a ways and means motion respecting an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 18, 2003. I am also tabling explanatory notes. I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 81(14) to inform the House that the motion to be considered tomorrow during consideration of the business of supply is as follows:

That this House call upon the government not to participate in the military intervention initiated by the United States in Iraq.

[Translation]

The motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie will be votable.

Copies of the motion are available at the Table.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ONTARIO BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my point of order has to do with something which you may or may not find to be within your jurisdiction to comment on, but I claim

that wherever parliamentary traditions and the legitimacy of Parliament are threatened this House of Commons should be concerned, and you, Mr. Speaker, as our servant and representative in many ways, should also be concerned.

I am speaking of a situation that has developed in Canada recently where parliamentary institutions are being called into question. A concern has been expressed by none other than the former clerk of the House of Commons, Monsieur Marleau, and it has to do with the fact that the Ontario government is proposing to release its budget not in the Ontario legislature but in a TV studio.

The former clerk of the House of Commons who, as we all know, co-authored the book Marleau and Montpetit, is quoted in the paper as saying that what is being done in Ontario is “an act of colonial arrogance, of a kind without precedent and not seen in the history of Canada, since the 1838-39 rebellion”. Our former clerk then went on to say that this TV budget “would be illegitimate in the parliamentary sense” and that the government there “does not understand the gravity of the course they’ve chosen”.

Mr. Speaker, I would call on you in the course of this point of order, and I would be interested to hear what members of other parties have to say on this, to speak on our behalf, to send a message on behalf of all members of Parliament here who value parliamentary tradition and the role of Parliament. What would we think, and I say this to all members of Parliament here, if any federal government chose to deliver the budget in a TV studio to a hand-picked audience instead of the House of Commons where it should properly deliver the budget?

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of us, to send a message to the Ontario legislature and to send a message of support to the Ontario Speaker, who is speaking up against this outrage. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to do this on behalf of all of us.

● (1510)

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure I speak on behalf of everyone here when I say that I too agree that this is an outrage, which it is, but it is not a point of order.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what my colleague in the NDP had to say and to the remarks of our former clerk.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you, in considering the point that he makes, to look at the sitting record for the last 10 or 12 years of the legislature of Ontario. I think you will find that this is only the latest sign of disrespect of the authority of a parliament in Canada.

For example, Mr. Speaker, you will discover that last year that legislature, which represents the largest province in Canada, sat for only 67 days, I believe. The previous year, I believe it sat for 61 days. There was a time not long ago when that legislature sat for as many days as we do, but gradually the premier of that province has been taking away the powers of that legislature, and he now feels that he does not need to consult the legislature on the budget.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to look at the sitting statistics of the Ontario legislature.

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: I think the Chair has heard enough on this point at the moment to render a decision on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

He is a very experienced member and I think he must recognize that however grave the situation may be in the province of Ontario, it is not a point of order in terms of the procedures of the House as to what might go on there in terms of procedural matters. That is a matter for the Speaker of the Ontario legislature to decide.

Mr. Speaker Carr of course is someone well known to many of us in the House. I must say that your Speaker here is a member of the group of Canadian Speakers that meet on an annual basis and is well known to Mr. Carr. In fact, our latest meeting in January was in Toronto at Queen's Park. I had the pleasure of visiting with him and other colleagues from across the country on that occasion. Naturally, we discussed matters relating to procedure.

[*Translation*]

But, at the same time, it is difficult to present an argument to suggest that the procedures of the Ontario legislature constitute a Point of Order here in this House. It is not your Speaker's responsibility to make decisions about procedure in the Ontario legislature.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona however indicated he wanted to send a message and he wanted your Speaker to send a message. The Speaker will be glad to convey a message that has been adopted by the House.

The hon. member of course can arrange for a motion to be adopted by the House sending a message to the legislature of Ontario which your Speaker would be more than happy to convey. The matter will have to be either agreed to unanimously and adopted or voted through after debate.

The hon. member knows all these options. He knows the various means better than many members as to how he could get such a motion through the House. I invite him to pursue that remedy if he wishes to send a motion to the province of Ontario. I can assure him that your Speaker, as the humble servant of this House, will convey the message with all due diligence.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what you had to say. On that basis, I wonder if I might seek the unanimous consent of the House to propose a motion to the House having to do with what is going on in the Ontario legislature, or for that matter what is not going on in the Ontario legislature.

Do I have the unanimous consent of the House? Of course that is a question you have to ask, Mr. Speaker. I ask you to seek that unanimous consent.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I understand the games that are being played here. I applaud the ingenuity of both the member for Winnipeg—Transcona and, if I may say so, the loquacity of the Chair on this matter.

However, I would regard this as an intrusion in the affairs of another legislature which we would profoundly resent were it to occur from a provincial House.

Consequently, if a motion of that kind were put, I would deny unanimous consent.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Where does the member stand on it?

• (1515)

The Speaker: The Chair was trying to be loquacious in order to set out the terms on which we could move, if there was any movement on the part of the House in that direction. Clearly, the right hon. member for Calgary Centre has indicated there will not be.

The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona is an experienced member. He knows he cannot stand up and just say he is asking for unanimous consent to propose something. He has to have something concrete.

I know he can draft something and go through the usual channels. He is, after all, a person who has considerable authority in his party and knows all the House leaders. He can make the necessary arrangements if there is to be agreement.

Of course, he will want to discuss the matter with the right hon. member for Calgary Centre.

We are losing out on this one. I think the subject is pretty much exhausted, but the member for Winnipeg—Transcona can try once more.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, let the record show that the Tories and the Alliance refused to take the opportunity to condemn what is going on in Ontario.

The Speaker: The hon. member I thought was going to try to be helpful.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, during question period I referred to a letter of which I have a copy. I now seek the agreement of the House of Commons to table this document in the House.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the tabling of this document?

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 12 petitions.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 32(2) of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2003-07 Corporate Plan Summary of Export Development Canada.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

March 19, 2003

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 19th day of March, 2003, at 10:01 a.m.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Uteck
Secretary to the Governor General

The schedule indicates the bill assented to was Bill C-12, an act to promote physical activity and sport—Chapter No. 2.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 22nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Prince Edward Island.

The report informs the House that no objections to the report were received from members.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1, the committee is requesting an extension of 30 days to consider Bill C-249, an act to amend the Competition Act, referred to the committee on October 24, 2002.

* * *

● (1520)

MERCHANT NAVY VETERANS DAY ACT

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): moved, seconded by the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern

Shore, for leave to introduce Bill C-411, An Act to establish Merchant Navy Veterans Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly take the opportunity before I read the bill to thank my hon. colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore for his seconding of the bill.

It is with great pride and honour that I present this non-partisan bill which I am sure will enjoy the full support of all members of the House of Commons. I also send a special thanks to Mr. Jack Stapleton in my riding.

I would hereby ask the House to listen to the preamble of the bill to establish merchant navy veterans day which states that whereas the veterans of the merchant navy have served—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member cannot read the bill when he presents it. It will get first reading today. He can give a brief summary of the bill. I know that is what he will want to do rather than read the bill, which hon. members will get to read once it has been printed.

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for reminding me of that. I just assumed that hon. members would like to hear it one more time as they did in the last session.

This is clearly a bill to recognize the efforts of merchant navy veterans throughout the various conflicts in which Canada has participated and, the thousands of lives that have been lost to ensure and shore up democracy not only in this country but all around the world.

I say here and now that I could not be more proud to present this bill to the House of Commons.

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

* * *

ORGAN DONATION ACT

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-412, an act to establish a National Organ Donor Registry and to coordinate and promote organ donation throughout Canada.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce an act to establish a national organ donor registry and to coordinate and promote organ donation throughout Canada. This bill is intended to save lives by ensuring that Canadians in need of life-saving organs can benefit from the most efficient and coordinated system of identifying and matching donors to meet the need.

Improving our low donation rate of 15 per million is critically important. So too is improving coordination so we are able to receive the best possible outcome from organ donations that are made. Those who do receive organs are living longer and healthier lives.

Nearly 150 of the more than 3,500 Canadians on transplant lists die each year while waiting. It is my belief and the belief of many others that we can benefit from the registry set out in this bill and that we can make a difference in the lives of Canadians who are desperately in need of organs today.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-413, an act to amend the Criminal Code (vehicle identification number).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Skeena for seconding the bill.

I am introducing this legislation to amend the Criminal Code with respect to auto crime, specifically to include a section that makes tampering with a vehicle identification number, or VIN, a criminal offence. This bill makes it a criminal offence to alter, deface or remove a VIN.

Statistics Canada reports that auto theft has been increasing for years at an annual cost to Canadians of at least \$600 million. The Criminal Code does not specifically address vehicle identification numbers, thereby creating a giant loophole for organized crime.

For years, police have been saying that tampering with the vehicle identification number must be made a Criminal Code offence to aid in the investigation and prosecution of organized auto theft rings. By tabling this legislation I am making it available to the justice minister to use in closing this loophole. Auto crime investigators need a Criminal Code section prohibiting the obliteration, alteration or removal of a vehicle identification number to shut down auto theft rings operated by organized crime.

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

* * *

• (1525)

[Translation]

PETITIONS**IRAQ**

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition that appears to me to be very relevant in the context of the conflict between Iraq and the United States, and also as regards Canada's involvement in that conflict. The petition reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned young members and supporters of Amnesty International, having gathered for our annual convention, are very concerned because the use of military force is one of the options being considered by some members of the UN Security Council on the issue of Iraq.

We urge the House of Commons of Canada to give paramount importance to the protection of human rights and to humanitarian concerns relating to the lives and security of the Iraqi population. We do not want Canada to get involved in a military operation decided unilaterally, against the wishes of the United Nations, by a superpower, as the United States are currently undertaking”.

This petition is signed by some 500 supporters and members of Amnesty International.

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition which says no to war in Iraq. It bears the signatures of hundreds of Canadians to be added to the thousands who have already signed similar petitions that have been previously tabled.

One of the provisions of the petition is the call for the Canadian Parliament to reject U.S. proposals to have Canada participate in any way in an illegal war. A lot of Canadians remain concerned that although the government has said it is not prepared to participate, there are 31 military officers actively engaged in the Middle East with the U.K. and U.S. military. We have many ships in the gulf area. We want to be certain that Parliament speaks clearly with one voice to say that Canada will not be participating in any active military engagement in the Middle East.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting two petitions today.

The first petition is signed by a group of my constituents who support ethical stem cell research. They support research for such diseases as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injury and so forth. Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find cures for the foregoing illnesses and therapies.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by a number of my constituents. They call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities be outlawed.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition today on child pornography. It is signed by many constituents in my riding and many of them are first nations people living on reserves.

The petitioners call the attention of the House to the fact that the creation and use of child pornography is condemned by a clear majority of Canadians, and that the courts have not applied the current pornography law in a way that makes it clear that such exploitation of children will be met with swift punishment.

They call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if I could seek unanimous support within the House to take my bill directly to second reading and in turn refer it to committee at the next available sitting day for committee.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 119, 151 and 166.

[Text]

Question No. 119—**Mr. Rick Borotsik:**

Can the Minister responsible for Agriculture and Agri-Food provide an estimate of the increase in crop insurance premiums for next year in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Governments are currently in the process of finalizing all elements of the agricultural policy framework. This framework will guide the development of all aspects of government support for the agricultural sector over the next five years. The APF covers not only business risk management, but provides for protecting the environment, increasing our innovation and science efforts and better equipping farmers under the renewal element in a single, solid platform that will help Canadian agriculture maximize new opportunities at home and in the world market.

The crop insurance program will be an essential component of the APF. Its importance has been demonstrated once again with its quick payment of record levels of payouts in recent years. The APF will maintain successful elements of the current crop insurance program as well as offer additional flexibility and funding to expand and enhance the program. Specifically, full implementation of the APF will: encourage greater participation through the development of a broader range of program options and benefits; offer all farmers access to the maximum coverage level, 90%; provide farmers across Canada with the same level of federal premium support; target the greatest level of government support to severe production loss situations; and increase the federal government's share of support from about 50% to 60% of the total government contributions.

Most provinces have or are about to announce their 2003 crop insurance program changes and therefore the projected premium costs for 2003 are becoming more clear.

Premium costs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba will all be increasing for 2003. The amount and reason for the cost increases vary by province, however, all three provincial governments and the federal government have agreed that the producers' share of total premium costs will not change for 2003.

Each year the provinces determine crop insurance premium rates based on actuarial formula. The 2003 premium rates will be increasing because of higher coverage due to the updated yields, recent large losses and the resulting change in a province's cumulative financial position. Despite these increases, premium rates are still significantly lower than the levels throughout much of the 1990s. Governments are also contributing more, 60%, toward premiums in the current year compared to about 50% a decade ago. When good crops are produced, producer's average premium

decrease; in years where more losses occurred, the average premium increase to ensure the sustainability of the crop insurance program.

In addition, the total premium costs will also be increasing due to rising participation levels resulting from program enhancements to existing programs and the introduction of new programs. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan will be introducing new and expanding existing programs for 2003. Alberta's premium cost estimates reflect participation increases of as much as 30% to 40% over the record levels obtained in 2002, for their forage and pasture programs.

Higher insurable prices in 2003 compared to the values used for 2002 will also factor in increased premium costs. As a result of these higher insured prices, producers will have more protection in the event of a crop loss. This higher level of protection means that farmers and governments will pay more premiums but producers have the option of selecting lower price levels to help keep premium costs affordable.

Based on the factors discussed above, the latest 2003 premium estimates for the Prairie provinces and a Canadian total are compared with 2002 values in the attached table.

Total Crop Insurance Premiums (\$ millions)		
	2002 Premiums	2003 Estimated Premiums
Alberta	236	335
Saskatchewan	233	356
Manitoba	89.7	110.6
Canada	728.5	995.4

Question No. 151—**Mr. Jim Abbott:**

For each year from 1993 to 2002, what was the total amount billed to the Department of Canadian Heritage and its Crown corporations and agencies by the Capital Hill Group?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):
Department of Canadian Heritage:

Nil.

Canada Council for the Arts:

The Canada Council for the Arts has made no payments to the Capital Hill Group for the period indicated.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, CBC:

The CBC indicates that agreements with service suppliers are confidential.

Routine Proceedings

Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board:

N/A. Capital Hill Group has not billed the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board between 1993 to 2002.

Canadian Film Development Corporation, (Telefilm):

Total amount billed by Capital Hill Group:

1993-94, \$0.00;
 1994-95, \$0.00;
 1995-96, \$0.00;
 1996-97, \$0.00;
 1997-98, \$0.00;
 1998-99, \$0.00;
 1999-2000, \$0.00;
 2000-01, \$403.20;
 2001-02, \$900.48

Canadian Museum of Civilization:

The Canadian Museum of Civilization has had no billings from the Capital Hill Group for the period indicated.

Canadian Museum of Nature:

During fiscal years 1993-94 to 2001-02, the Canadian Museum of Nature, CMN, has had no dealings with the Capital Hill Group. Therefore, no amount was billed to us.

Canadian Radio-Television & Telecommunications Commission (CRTC):

For the period 1995-96 to 2001-02, the CRTC did not make any payment to the Capital Hill Group. Information for prior fiscal years is not available as financial records are kept for only seven years, in accordance with the "Retention Guidelines for Common Administrative Records of the Government of Canada".

National Archives of Canada:

A review of our contracts and accounts payable files reveals that no payments were made by the National Archives of Canada to Capital Hill Group for the period 1993 to 2002, fiscal years 1993-94 to 2001-02. Additionally, financial data is only available going back to 1996-97, all previous records having been disposed in accordance with records disposition schedules.

National Arts Centre Corporation:

The National Arts Centre did not make any payment to the Capital Hill Group for any of the years requested.

National Battlefields Commission:

During fiscal years 1993-94 to 2001-02, the National Battlefields Commission, NBC, has had no dealings with the Capital Hill Group. Therefore, no amount was billed to us.

National Capital Commission:

Our records show that the NCC has not had any amounts billed from the company mentioned in the question.

National Film Board:

There were no transactions between the National Film Board and the Capital Hill Group for any of the years requested.

National Gallery of Canada:

The National Gallery of Canada has had no dealings with the Capital Hill Group.

National Library:

A review of our contracts and accounts payable files reveals that no payments were made by the National Library of Canada to Capital Hill Group for the period 1993 to 2002, fiscal years 1993-94 to 2001-02. Additionally, financial data is only available going back to 1996-97, all previous records having been disposed in accordance with records disposition schedules.

National Museum of Science and Technology Corporation:

The Canada Museum of Science and Technology Corporation has not been invoiced from the Capital Hill Group from 1993-94 to 2001-02.

Parks Canada Agency:

From April 1, 1993 to December 31, 2002, the Capital Hill Group billed the following amount to the Parks Canada Agency: Nil.

Public Service Commission:

The Public Service Commission has not been invoiced from the Capital Hill Group from 1994-95 to 2001-02. The Public Service Commission cannot extract the information for the year 1993-94, as it is no longer in our archives.

Question No. 166—**Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the language of menus and other services to the public at restaurants located at premises that are rented from the National Capital Commission in the ByWard Market and other locations: (a) since what date have standard leases required that restaurateurs and other service providers provide services to the public in both official languages; (b) which types of services are covered by the requirement to provide services in both official languages and at which locations; (c) are there any service providers who are not covered by such a provision in their leases and, if so, at what locations are these service providers located; and (d) what means, if any, have been used to enforce this leasehold condition with regard to the specific leases where it does apply?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):
National Capital Commission:

(a) The NCC commercial tenants are not considered "service providers" on behalf of the NCC, but rather are private commercial businesses that lease space in NCC owned property. NCC leases dated as early as 1974 include a clause relating to official languages.

Routine Proceedings

(b) NCC leases stipulate that tenants shall maintain on the leased premises an adequate staff of employees to provide service to the public in both official languages of Canada. Leases also stipulate that all signs, menus, and promotional material shall be in both official languages of Canada, and that signage of the lessee affixed to the exterior of the leased premises and any window signage visible to the passing public, must be in both official languages of Canada. These requirements are typically associated with commercial establishments on NCC owned property.

(c) Some of the leases were assumed by the NCC as the result of property acquisition or by the transfer of ownership and do not include the requirement regarding the provision of services in both official languages. However, such provisions will be added to the rental terms as these leases are renewed. Such properties include: 96-100 Sparks, Tim Horton's restaurant, office space and retail; 30 Metcalfe, Hong Kong Bank and offices; 123 Queen Street, Oscar's restaurant; 134 Sparks, Shawarma restaurant, all in Ottawa; and 101 rue Montcalm, Lotus Thai restaurant, in Gatineau, Quebec.

(d) The NCC has taken a collaborative approach to obtain compliance by appealing to the lessees' business sense to obtain their co-operation when a deficiency is reported through a complaint or otherwise. In order to enforce the conditions regarding the provision of services in both official languages, the NCC or its agents inspect leased premises to monitor progress, contact tenants by telephone and send letters requesting compliance to the terms of the lease.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 126 could be made an order for return, this return will be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 126—**Mr. Bill Casey:**

With regard to reports in December 2001 that the Department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) was taking steps to cooperate with Canada Customs and Revenue (CCRA) to identify from tax returns, seniors who were entitled to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), but did not do so, in 2001 and 2002: (a) what steps were taken to ensure that Canadian seniors who were entitled to the GIS received the benefit; (b) were seniors contacted by HRDC or CCRA by mail regarding eligibility for the GIS; (c) if seniors were contacted, which department made the inquiries; (d) how many seniors, if contacted, responded to the inquiry; (e) if inquiries were made, how many of the seniors who responded were granted the GIS; (f) what steps have been taken to identify the shortcomings in the system that allowed approximately 250,000 seniors between 1993 and 2001 not to receive the GIS even though their tax returns indicated that they were eligible; (g) what changes have been made to the administrative process in both HRDC and CCRA to ensure that all seniors entitled to the GIS receive it?

(Return tabled).

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

● (1530)

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-31, in the name of the hon. member for St. John's West, is acceptable to the government. The papers are tabled immediately.

Motion P-31

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of all reports and background papers prepared by Ray Hession respecting the gun registry program.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Motion No. P-31 be deemed to have been adopted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-20, in the name of the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

Motion P-20

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of all documentation, including reports, minutes of meeting, notes, e-mails, advertising, memos and correspondence since January 2002 within the Department of Transport that relates to the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol that sets out the benefits, how the targets are to be reached and its cost to the department.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada advises that its files contain approximately 13 megabytes of electronically stored information, or approximately 53,000 pages corresponding to the broad range of the request. As such, it is prohibitively expensive in labour and money to produce and would not be available in any reasonable time frame.

I therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the motion be transferred for debate.

The Speaker: The motion is transferred for debate.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the other Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TRANSPORTATION AMENDMENT ACT

The House resumed from March 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act, to enact the VIA Rail Canada Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act and to enact the VIA Rail Canada act. It was tabled in the House on February 25 at the same time as the document called, “Straight Ahead—A Vision for Transportation in Canada” was tabled.

The press release that came with the “Straight Ahead” package said:

This document provides the vision, the policy framework and principles that will guide the Government of Canada's decisions in the years ahead in key areas such as marketplace policies, strategic infrastructure investments and initiatives in support of the broader government agenda on competitive cities and healthy communities, climate change and innovation and skills.

Straight Ahead is the culmination of extensive consultations that began in June 2000 with the Minister's Millennium Conference on Transportation and continued with roundtable discussions across the country headed by the Minister of Transport. It includes responses to many of the recommendations of the Canada Transportation Act Review Panel and of the Independent Transition Observer on Airline Restructuring.

In initiating the second reading of Bill C-26 yesterday, the Minister of Transport told the House:

In our policy document, “Straight Ahead”, we talk of the culmination of an initiative that began in 2001 to review the transportation policy for the next 10 years and beyond. “Straight Ahead” proposes a vision to guide the continued development of a sustainable transportation system for the country. It also conveys the government's response to the 2001 report of the Canada Transportation Act review panel.

The amendments to the CTA that are introduced in this bill are an important step in moving the vision forward. “Straight Ahead”...

In the eyes of the minister, Bill C-26 is the implementation in part of the “Straight Ahead” document and that in turn is the government's response to the 2001 report of the Canada Transportation Act review panel. It is therefore helpful to have read the 2001 report of the Canada Transportation Act review panel.

On page 191 of that report, one finds a discussion of fuel taxes, something that is important in the country now, certainly with regard to the ongoing crisis in Iraq and the labour crisis that existed in Venezuela as well.

It is dealt with in the report on page 191 but the government does not deal with it here. The panel states:

Federal fuel taxes stand out as having no evident justification in the eyes of road users.

The Panel's proposal is that federal fuel taxes be recognized as part of the price paid for the use of road infrastructure.

The CTA review panel proposed that federal fuel taxes be recognized as part of the price paid for the use of road infrastructure. It recommended various ways that the federal fuel taxes could be

Government Orders

used to fund Canada's highway infrastructure. Yet while the future actions section of the infrastructure chapter in “Straight Ahead” talks of making strategic investments in trade and passenger corridors, such as the national highway system, the talk is truly hollow when one looks at Bill C-26, or the recent federal budget.

It is important to understand the timing. We know the federal budget was tabled on February 18 and that prebudget consultations had been going on for months before that. We are also told that the “Straight Ahead” document is the culmination of extensive consultations that began in June 2000. If we assume that the Ministers of Finance and Transport are in contact with each other, it is a virtual certainty that the idea of dedicating a percentage of the federal fuel tax to building, maintaining and expanding our national highway infrastructure was discussed at some point around the cabinet table and lead up to the current budget.

Nonetheless, when the budget was tabled, it contained only an additional \$300 million in annual funding for Canada's infrastructure, including highways and roadways. The \$300 million seems like an impressive amount until we actually do the math. Statistics Canada estimates that there were 31,485,623 people living inside Canada in October 2002. This year the generous Liberals will spend a grand total of \$9.53 per person next year on infrastructure and about two-thirds of that, or about \$6.38 per person, will go into highways and roads.

While the government is spending some \$6.38 per person on roads and highways next year, if gas stays around 85¢ per litre for Canadians, the Liberals will collect \$4.8 billion in federal fuel taxes plus another \$2.2 billion in GST on the gasoline and taxes as well. That is \$7 billion this year, or roughly \$222 for every man, woman and child in Canada.

• (1535)

Let me repeat those numbers so it sinks in on the Liberal side over there. The Liberals will collect roughly \$222 in federal fuel taxes and GST on those taxes on fuel from every man, woman and child in Canada. At the same time, they will strategically invest, as is their code word, roughly \$6.38 per person into roads and highways. If we wonder where the \$215, the difference between the \$222 they collected and the \$6.38 they spend on roads, perhaps the statement contained on page 91 of the 2001 report of the Canada Transportation Act review panel will help us out. It states, “Federal fuel taxes stand out as having no evident jurisdiction in the eyes of road users”.

The biggest problem with the “Straight Ahead” document is that it proposes a vision to guide the continued development of a sustainable transportation system for the country without suggesting a funding formula for something as basic as roads. In my mind that is not a vision, it is fog.

To the extent that Bill C-26 is inspired by this “Straight Ahead” document, it is essentially empty rhetoric by the Minister of Transport.

I would like to turn my attention now to the specifics of Bill C-16. I have already dealt with what is absent, the commitment of highway funding, but now I would like to address what is in the bill.

Government Orders

Bill C-26 deals with two main themes: airlines and railways. In each case it is a mishmash of missed opportunities and dangerous initiatives.

On the aviation side, it is philosophically inconsistent. On one hand, we find several clauses arguing for a greater role for competition and market forces. Clause 3 recognizes that competition and market forces are the prime agents in providing viable and effective service in the air industry. That is a good start rhetorically, but then it starts to get confusing for those who read the bill.

In both clauses 18 and 24 we see the concept that under certain circumstances a non-Canadian company might offer domestic air service for "any period of time". It is as though the minister is recognizing the idea that in certain situations foreign carriers might be seen as a last resort to spur competition. However at the very same time there is nothing in the bill that raises the limit on the number of shares of a Canadian carrier that a foreign airline might acquire. Thus the same type of problems that foiled the Onyx takeover of Air Canada remain and are part of the Liberal vision for the future of Canada's airline industry.

At the same time, Bill C-26 proposes a massive re-regulation of the domestic airline industry. For example, clause 11 gives the Minister of Transport new powers to review mergers even though the competition commissioner is already involved in the process. It also gives the Canadian Transportation Agency the power to ensure that merged corporation is "Canadian". Right there, instead of one person examining the competitive implications of any proposed merger, we now have two. Bigger bureaucracy and slower service, that is the Liberal vision, and also having someone in the process who perhaps has no expertise whatsoever in the very issue that the minister may be dealing with.

We also see in clause 16 that it requires airlines to revise advertising to include all non-governmental fees and prices and to not advertise one-way tickets where a person needs to buy a round trip to get the exact price that is being advertised. However let us not forget that the Air Transport Association of Canada voluntarily agreed to this before Christmas, and that the sticking point is not the Canadian airlines industry but the need to get both Canadian and U.S. carriers to adopt similar advertising strategies for tickets on transborder routes. Clause 16 is essentially harmless but it is an attempt by the Liberals to take credit for something that the airline industry has already done voluntarily and has already done through the powers of market forces.

Clause 20 of the bill is just downright dangerous. It would give the Canadian Transportation Agency the power to review and even set airline fares in cases where there was not true competition on a route. The concept of having a government agency tell a private for profit company that it has to provide service between two points on terms and conditions that the government decides is simply frightening.

Clause 26 of the bill goes further, mandating that carriers accept domestic interlining code shares and permit access by their competitors to their frequent flyer programs. This type of policy is a real re-regulation and is driven by a genuine anti-competitive spirit on the Liberal side.

The Minister of Transport keeps telling the House about WestJet, Jetsgo, CanJet and Air Transat, but I can tell him that none of them in fact will want to be in Aeroplan, Air Canada's program, and none of them want to be forced to interline with anyone else.

● (1540)

If one looks at Ryanair, an Irish airline similar to WestJet, a low cost service provider, it actually states that it is a point to point airline and, therefore, does not offer and cannot facilitate the transfer of passengers or their baggage to other airlines. That is a management decision by a private sector company called Ryanair, and it makes it on its own.

Under Bill C-26 it could be illegal for Jetsgo, CanJet, WestJet, Air Transat and Air Canada to adopt a similar policy.

If the government wants to regulate the airline industry, it should nationalize Air Canada, turn it into a crown corporation and abandon any pretext of private sector competition that it claims exists in Canada. Otherwise, it should truly respect that competition in the market forces is the prime agent of providing a viable and effective transportation service and do what it can to promote it, as a government.

One way it may start doing that is to have the people who book civil service travel make sure that airlines, beyond Air Canada, are considered from time to time as potential service providers. If the government truly wants to stimulate competition, it could start by buying airline tickets on some competitive fare basis rather than just going straight to Air Canada, as it consistently and persistently does.

Speaking of crown corporations, I want to turn my attention now to VIA Rail.

Yesterday in the House, on this very bill, Bill C-26, the Minister of Transport said "Unlike the majority of other crown corporations, VIA Rail did not have its own legislation".

In order for us to understand the impact of that statement, one has to understand the different legal structures that the government uses to deliver various services.

The first is a line government department, such as Transport Canada, that used to manage airports and provide air traffic services. There was no crown corporation. The government department played a direct role in managing airports and air traffic services.

The second is a crown corporation, such as Canada Post, where the company can borrow with government backing and the government owns all the shares, names the directors and has full control.

The third is a private company, incorporated under the Canada Business Corporations Act, where the shares are traded on the stock exchange and the company follows free market rules, but the government owns a minority of the shares and names some of the directors. Petro-Canada is in this situation today and so is VIA Rail.

Government Orders

What the government wants to do in clause 67 of Bill C-26 is to take the private corporation known as VIA Rail and flip it over into a crown corporation.

It is important for us to understand what is happening here. VIA Rail, like Petro-Canada, is essentially operating as a private company right now. All the government needs to do to privatize it is to begin selling the company's shares on the stock market. Rather than doing this, the Liberals want to make VIA Rail a crown corporation, admitting, in effect, that it cannot compete without massive taxpayer subsidies. Let us not forget that this too is part of the Liberal vision for the future of rail travel in Canada.

Bill C-26 was sold as the implementation of a transportation blueprint, a blueprint that is not clear on competition in the airline sector, that proposes to make VIA Rail a crown corporation, and that is silent on the biggest transportation concern of western farmers who were rhetorically told that it would be in the bill. However, that concern of western farmers with regard to grain transportation, running rights and so on, is not in this whatsoever.

Therefore, rather than providing a real vision for Canada's transportation future, as the rhetoric of the package that was tabled by the finance minister says, the bill, which twins along with that, would not in fact accomplish that whatsoever.

I want to talk very briefly on another issue because of the reality of the situation in Iraq. Yesterday in his speech as well, the Minister of Transport talked about the issue of port security. I want to use an example of where I come from, in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, which is half an hour or 45 minutes east of the city of Vancouver.

Prior to the Liberal government's reckless activities with regard to national security, Canada had the Canada ports police. The ports police in the City of Vancouver did a tremendous job and put tremendous effort forward in terms of securing our borders, helping with cargo freights, helping to stop people who basically sell people into indentured servitude in Canada in exchange for getting them here on rusty cargo ships.

Canada had a ports police that helped the police against those things and the ports police did an effective job. There was some debate on whether they were effective enough, large enough or it was cost effective.

● (1545)

However, the Liberal government, rather than addressing some of those concerns, rather than making some of the difficult decisions of raising the hood on the Canada ports police situation, looking at the engine and making sure that it was running properly, it decided to end the ports police.

Now we have a situation of drugs getting on shore in my riding in the City of Port Moody, which is part of the port of Vancouver that extends all the way from Delta in the south up to Indian Arm and Burrard Inlet in the north. It is a huge area for the port authorities to cover.

Since we have had the scrapping and elimination of the ports police, the City of Port Moody is now responsible for securing the port of Port Moody. It sounds good on paper but the problem is that

the City of Port Moody and the Port Moody police do not own a boat. It is awfully hard to have drug interdiction, to stop smuggling into the cities and do an effective job of securing port security when the government turns over port security to the City of Port Moody and the Port Moody police and they do not own a boat in order to get those things done. The government offers nothing, no financing whatsoever, to help the City of Port Moody and other cities like it to combat smuggling.

The government brags about the fact that it is spending \$172 million on port security but not a single dime of that federal Liberal money will go into my riding in the City of Port Moody to help it buy a boat in order to ensure security.

If the Liberal government took security seriously, it would re-establish the ports police, reorganize it so it was an effective mechanism to ensure that they could have an impact on drug interdiction and prevent the selling of human beings into indentured servitude, which is what is happening with the people smuggling on the west coast of British Columbia. They could establish a port security system that really works.

The scrapping of the ports police in the City of Vancouver was a tremendous mistake by the government, and there is nothing in Bill C-26 and nothing in the response to the realities of September 11, and nothing in the budget that we have been debating. There is nothing that takes real port security measures seriously.

The Liberals seem to think that the current infrastructure is fine. As long as some new technology is put in place and more money is put in place, this will work out all right. However, it will not be that way.

The City of Port Moody is hurting. It has had the keys to security turned over to it but it does not have a boat to put the keys in and get it started. Those kinds of examples are happening all over Canada, on the east coast, west coast, up and down the St. Lawrence where communities are being forced to take over the security responsibilities.

In closing let us not forget that the first responsibility of the government, above all else, is to secure citizens and make national security its top priority. It is Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs"; the first thing is to protect citizens; second is to ensure their safety into the future with the basic provisions of life, and then build an economy on top of that.

The government's number one responsibility above all is to ensure the security of its citizens and yet it scrapped the ports police. The Liberal government's decision to scrap the ports police was a tremendous mistake and it has put a huge burden on the City of Port Moody, a burden that it should not have to bear. It is a disgrace that the government made that choice.

● (1550)

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Having consulted with my colleagues in the various opposition parties, I believe if you seek it you would find unanimous consent to have my bill, an act to establish Merchant Navy Veterans Day, at second reading and in turn referred to committee at the next available sitting day.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The House has heard the terms of the motion of the hon. member. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, who just spoke.

I just got back from a tour during which I took a look at transportation in my region. I toured the Gaspé Peninsula. I know that the hon. member represents a riding located in the Vancouver area, so perhaps he is not experiencing this problem. However, even though we support the bill now before us, this does not in any way solve the issue of transportation in remote areas.

I would like to tell the hon. member that, as regards air transportation, the situation has become a catastrophe at home. Service in our region used to be provided by an Air Canada subsidiary, but that company is about to cut service completely.

As for rail transportation—the train used to belong to CN and VIA Rail—currently, a train leaves Gaspé only once or twice a week, depending on the circumstances. This is getting utterly ridiculous.

There is also the other rumour regarding a request by certain companies for the deregulation of transportation by bus, which is more or less the only mode of transportation that we have left in our region. Right now, it is practically the only mode of public transportation. Air transportation, with its exorbitant costs, is also bound to disappear, despite the Quebec government's efforts to prevent that from happening.

I believe that the cause of all this is the deregulation of transportation. Air Canada finally eliminated its competitor, Inter-Canadien, by reducing prices, which left it alone. Today, Air Canada is not profitable and is on the brink of bankruptcy. Therefore, because of deregulation, we will lose access to air transportation.

I would like to give my colleague an example regarding transportation by bus, which is regulated. We have an excellent service. What were bus carriers offered so they would provide service to remote areas? They were offered protected routes, that is profitable routes where they have no competition, which enables them to provide good service to remote areas like ours.

I am convinced that, without such regulation of transportation by bus, people who live in northern British Columbia would face the same situation as we do. The same goes for people in northern Ontario and in all of western Canada, who are spread out over a vast territory.

That being said, I would ask my colleague the following question. I would like to know if he would be in favour of a new form of regulation that would give an air carrier protected and profitable routes to enable it to provide service to regions such as mine, namely the Gaspé Peninsula and the lower St. Lawrence area.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the answer is no. The

hon. member has raised a lot of issues here, but I do not agree with him on the last thing he mentioned.

It should not come as a surprise that the Canadian Alliance is against big government and unnecessary regulation. In his question, the hon. member pointed out that if airlines were guaranteed profitable routes, then we should expect regulations to ensure that these communities have access to permanent services.

But the philosophical problem is that if any of the routes that is granted to Air Canada or any other airline turns a profit, then, we do not need regulations. We need regulations for the routes where there is no competition.

We believe that the ability to travel throughout our country by car, plane, train, ship or any other means of transportation is not a right. It is not an absolute right to be able to travel throughout our country by whatever means of transportation we choose just because the government can regulate an industry and levy taxes to offer us that option.

It is not up to the government. It is not a right of all Canadians to have all means of transportation guaranteed permanently by legislation. It is really impossible for the government to have such a principle, that is to pass legislation and pay for it today and indefinitely. In my opinion, the hon. member is proposing something that is impossible.

If he does want to do this, however, he needs to be honest. If he wants to do so, he needs to be frank with the people in his riding, and tell them it will cost a lot more to pay for these various services. Government will have to be expanded, new taxes levied. In my opinion, the people in his own riding will not be very thrilled with that.

There is one more important point, however, on which I agree with my Bloc colleague. Bill C-26 is really nothing at all, and not because it is poorly drafted.

It was introduced by the Minister of Transport a week after the budget. He says he has carried out all his consultations in order to present a major document on transportation. That he has spoken with everybody and obtained all the recommendations relating to all potential avenues for the transportation industry. What he has done, however, is taken all these recommendations, combined them into one fat document, and handed them to us a week after the federal budget.

Had it been a month before, we could have obtained support on its specific recommendations. Then perhaps we might have obtained money in the budget to implement his proposals. There could have been a debate on regulating the airline industry, highways and so on.

But the Minister of Transport has not met his own responsibilities. He has really reneged on what he was supposed to do, which is to offer us new ideas on transportation, and then to obtain support in the budget for the various projects so they could be implemented, as I have said, without any new taxes. This goes for the proposals made by the member from the Bloc Québécois.

Government Orders

•(1555)

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I must admit that I have not gone through this transportation bill in the detail that my colleague has, but it seems to me that it fails to have any kind of vision for the future. It does not deal with the Kyoto issue of CO₂ and how transportation and transportation deliverers might deal with that subject. It certainly has not considered farmers and the problems they now have with getting their grain to market because branch lines have closed. It does not deal with the long term problems the airline industry faces. The bill does not deal with the airline industry or the tourist industry, which I had a part of in another life. It also does not deal with policing, security or the tax that we have all been paying for over a year and for which no one has seen much change in terms of real security.

It seems like this is just another little piece of legislation that really is rather meaningless. It does not address those major problems in this huge country we call Canada and which the government always says it is trying to deal with. I would like to have the member's opinion on that.

Mr. James Moore: Madam Speaker, I agree. If one were to enumerate the things that are not in the bill but could be in the bill, one would have a very long list indeed: no elimination of the air tax; no mandating of gas taxes to roads; the increasing subsidization of Via Rail, which is not sustainable over a long period of time; no scrapping of the Air Canada Public Participation Act, which is something that makes complete sense; and no commitment to this Windsor-Quebec City corridor. We keep hearing of that corridor as a proposal or a theory from the Minister of Transport, but he never seems to put meat on the bones so that we can actually debate whether or not this theory has any kind of practical usage whatsoever.

As well, there is no mention whatsoever of Kyoto. In fact, as for the new jet train concept, the train that is built by Bombardier that would be on the Windsor to Quebec City corridor, that train uses the same jet engines that are used in the planes it is supposed to replace, so there is a net no benefit at all to the environment in terms of CO₂ emissions.

There is nothing in Bill C-26 in terms of port security. There is nothing in it in terms of airport management.

I am speculating here, of course, but this could very well be the final transport bill from this transport minister and again, after years of being transport minister, he has completely failed to outline with meat, bones and cash a real transportation infrastructure program for Canada. He has failed again.

•(1600)

Ms. Judy Sgro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-26 and the importance of this legislation for the country.

Moving people and goods efficiently, safely, securely and in an environmentally respectful way is vital to our economy. As Canada's national passenger rail service, VIA Rail has an important role to

play: providing safe, high quality, efficient passenger service to Canadians.

Moving people out of their cars and onto trains is one solution to the problem of congestion, which we see each and every day in and around our cities and on our major highways and was an issue frequently mentioned as we did our work on the Prime Minister's task force on urban issues. Not only is congestion a personal frustration, but it also slows down our business.

Passenger rail also gives Canadians a convenient and economical choice, whether they are travelling for business or pleasure. Many Canadians do not have the means to travel by air.

For many Canadians in northern and remote parts of the country, rail provides an invaluable lifeline, especially where no other transportation options are available.

The Government of Canada is dedicated to passenger rail and its revitalization, not only as a viable transportation option that is central to our identity as Canadians but also as one that makes good economic and environmental sense.

A strong passenger rail system also contributes to building stronger communities. Passenger rail provides a vital link for the movement of people, encouraging business development and growth. VIA Rail connects some 450 communities with services that run across the country.

More Canadians are using the train today than ever before. In 2001, VIA Rail carried 70,000 more passengers than the previous year. In fact, passenger revenues have grown steadily over the past decade while VIA Rail has steadily improved the cost effectiveness of its services. VIA Rail now carries over 400,000 more passengers and operates 153 million more passenger miles than a decade ago. It has reduced government funding from 45.6¢ to 17.2¢ per passenger mile. VIA Rail's operating subsidy is now fixed at \$170 million per year compared to \$410 million in 1990.

With this demonstrated growth and improved cost effectiveness, we are pleased that we are making a commitment to passenger rail in legislation.

Up to now, VIA Rail has been operating as a crown corporation subject to the Financial Administration Act but governed by the Canada Business Corporations Act. But most crown corporations and other enterprises created by government are governed by special acts of Parliament. That is because they were created for specific purposes. Pilotage authorities are governed by the Pilotage Act. The port authorities are governed by the Canada Marine Act. Canada Post is governed by the Canada Post Corporation Act. It is time for VIA Rail to be governed by its own act of Parliament.

Bill C-26 sets VIA Rail's mandate in legislation, a mandate that calls for VIA to manage and provide a safe and efficient passenger rail service in Canada. This mandate is consistent with VIA's mission statement, which is to offer safe, high quality, efficient passenger rail service. This mandate means that VIA Rail will continue to provide its current passenger rail services across Canada.

Government Orders

From the perspective of the travelling public and taxpayers, there will be no changes to VIA Rail as a result of this new legislation. Trains will continue to run on the corridors and across the continent. VIA Rail will continue to receive appropriations from the government and the Minister of Transport will remain accountable for VIA Rail.

There are many who expected the legislation to specifically allow VIA Rail to finance its capital needs from the private sector so as to reduce government funding. Let me make it very clear that VIA Rail already has and will continue to have the legal power to borrow money to finance its capital needs, so we do not need to give the corporation special powers. However, it is subject to the Financial Administration Act, which sets out the control and accountability regime for crown corporations.

• (1605)

For VIA Rail to borrow money from the private sector, two approvals are needed. The governor in council must approve the corporation's five year strategic plan. This plan must set out the operating and capital budgets and any borrowing plan. The Minister of Finance must also approve the terms and conditions of the borrowing. To date, the government has prudently decided that private sector borrowings are not an appropriate source of funds for VIA Rail.

VIA Rail is an appropriation-dependent crown corporation. This means that VIA Rail relies on government funding for its operations as well as its capital needs. Also, the government is liable for VIA Rail's debts. As such, it makes more sense for the government to provide the capital funds as well as the operating funds.

Over the past few years, there have been a number of studies considering the privatization of VIA Rail or other public-private partnerships. There are some who expected that this legislation would allow for more private sector participation in the provision of inner city passenger services currently provided by VIA Rail.

The earlier studies confirmed that the timing was not right for such direction. The results of the last study show that passenger rail needed to be revitalized so that the private sector investment would be more attractive. To this end, the government announced in April 2002 that it would provide VIA Rail with an additional \$401 million in capital funding over the next five years to allow the company to address urgent capital requirements and to undertake a modest expansion.

Once the revitalization initiative launched in 2000 has been implemented fully, I expect the government will consider the next steps, but as members might expect, capital improvements to take some time to bear fruit.

VIA has already made improvements as a result of this funding. The company purchased 139 new passenger cars and began operating 21 new high speed locomotives in December 2001. It has also completed the refurbishment of several stations across the country and equipped the corridor fleet with waste retention systems.

However, the government recognizes that major investments are still required to maintain the integrity of Canada's rail passenger network and to ensure its viability in the long run.

VIA has been directed to review its long term capital requirements and to develop a capital investment plan for the government's consideration. This plan is to address the need to replace existing equipment and make additional track upgrades to improve rail services that are key to the corporation's future viability. In this context, it may be some years before the government can consider privatizing VIA Rail.

This legislation does not materially change anything for passengers, taxpayers or the corporation.

So what does this legislation do? It demonstrates the government's commitment to passenger rail in Canada. It sets out the government's objectives by requiring that VIA Rail provide safe and efficient passenger rail services. However, it recognizes that VIA operates in a commercial environment and therefore provides VIA with the flexibility to deal with the demands of the marketplace. It means that VIA can add capacity if there is sufficient demand or reduce capacity if there is insufficient demand.

This legislation would also allow VIA to use its excess capacity for purposes other than its mandate so as to reduce the need for government funding.

In setting the mandate for VIA Rail, the government also makes a commitment to ensure that VIA Rail has the resources to fulfill its mandate. The government made an initial commitment in 2000 by guaranteeing stable, annual operating funding of \$170 million and investing \$401 million to begin the revitalization of passenger rail.

With this new legislation, we make a commitment to continue improving passenger rail service to meet the needs of Canada across the country.

• (1610)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, my colleague from York West was here for the latter part of my talk at which time I raised some points that I had in a letter. Perhaps she can respond to that.

The singular biggest criticism that I have of this bill and, in fact, the blueprint itself was that it was tabled a week after the federal budget. A responsible, more effective approach by the transport minister, if he was really interested in doing something about transport—as there is going to be a really big push in mid-term between two election campaigns—was to have tabled his blueprint earlier. We know it was ready. He could have tabled the blueprint three months ago and then travelled around the country, talked to stakeholders, mayors, MPs, MLAs, and talked to everyone he could talk to. He could have talked to all the stakeholders across Canada and gathered support for some specific initiatives in that blueprint, then he could have taken it to cabinet and won some fights in the federal budget in order to obtain money for some specific proposals.

Government Orders

That is the way one moves the transportation ball forward. Instead, he delivered it a week after the budget when, even if he won some policy fights, it was only going to be regulatory stuff and there was not going to be any money, particularly when one thinks about things like the air tax, the gas tax, financing highways and ports, and so on. I think it is a failure on the part of the Minister of Transport that he did not table this before the budget to gather support and obtain a commitment in the budget for some of the ideas in the blueprint because as it stands now there is nothing in the blueprint that is going to get done.

I ask the parliamentary secretary to perhaps defend the approach of doing this because it seems to me, and to virtually every stakeholder I have seen, to be a completely ineffective way of getting the transportation interests of this country moved forward.

Ms. Judy Sgro: Madam Speaker, one of the recommendations that we made in our task force report to the Prime Minister was that Canada needed to have a national transportation transit strategy. The blueprint that the Minister of Transport laid out clearly starts us in that direction. There is much consultation and work to be done to ensure that the strategy that we want to see in the future will be the one that Canadians want to see and that we do a proper job. I think over the next nine months to a year of consultation we will attempt to move forward on this issue with something that all Canadians will support.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, my question is with respect to the railway operation in this country. The federal government spent millions of dollars on a study regarding rail transportation as it pertains to the grain industry, particularly in western Canada. I am sure the parliamentary secretary is aware of the Estey and Kroeger reports.

In the request from industry and in the best interests of the grain industry of western Canada the issue of getting rates for grain transportation as low as possible was the purpose of those studies. There was a strong recommendation that the grain transportation industry in western Canada should be based on commercial contract based systems.

There are two points I would ask the parliamentary secretary to comment on. First, the legislation does not seem to advance that in any way. In fact, it probably goes the other way in causing more regulation instead of less. Second, I would like to know what the parliamentary secretary has to say about the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board is supposed to be contracting 50% of its grain movement now. I would ask her to address those two points.

Ms. Judy Sgro: Madam Speaker, the hon. member points out the very issues that we are looking at in this legislation in ensuring that we meet the needs of those in the west, that we ensure we have a viable industry and that the Canadian Wheat Board and others utilize the rail lines for the efficient services that we want to see continue, as is currently the case.

• (1615)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I have two questions for the parliamentary secretary.

First, does the parliamentary secretary agree with the minister's idea of tolls being charged in the major cities to alleviate congestion? The minister made this statement on February 25. I wonder if the

municipalities of Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal, and other big cities where there is a lot of congestion have been consulted, and whether they are for this? Will the money go directly to those cities so that they can improve infrastructure? Obviously, it has been done in London, England, but I am not sure how successfully.

My second question is this. It is interesting that she talks about how we are going to use more rail, how important rail is, and how we will increase it. We have just spent the last 20 years in western Canada removing rail lines. In my own city we do not have rail lines downtown any more. They are out somewhere else. Yet now we are talking about increasing the use of passenger rail. Are we going to reverse everything we have been doing for 20 years?

Ms. Judy Sgro: Madam Speaker, I think often things go around in a circle. There is a recognition of the importance that rail lines play in our country to help us meet a variety of targets environmentally and to ensure that the air quality and all the environmental issues are looked up. There are many places where rail lines have been removed. I suggest that they may be revisiting some of those decisions that were made as we move forward with the whole issue ensuring that we have safe, fast, and efficient rail systems working.

The member's other question was regarding tolls. It is up to the municipalities to decide whether they want to use toll roads. Certainly, to deal with the congestion that is happening in all our major cities it is going to take a variety of innovative ways of looking at how we can decrease that congestion in the cities. We will have to look at improving the transit system and working with our partners, the provinces and cities, to find ways of reducing the gridlock in a variety of ways. As far as tolls are concerned, it will be up to municipalities to make those decisions.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Madam Speaker, concerning the rail line abandonment process, in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake there is the Winnipeg Beach line that runs from Winnipeg up to the town of Gimli and that line was slated for abandonment. It was to have been transferred to Cando Contracting Ltd. in Brandon which is a short line operator of which Gordon Peters is the owner. The company is quite willing and happy to take it over from Canadian Pacific Railway but that is not happening.

The problem is that the provincial government has successor right labour legislation that it is insisting must go along with the transfer and sale of the line. However, the private company, which is mostly run by the owners and the operators themselves, will be as uneconomical as CP Rail is if they have to have that same labour legislation applied when it takes it over as a short line operator.

My riding cannot do without that railway. I heard the parliamentary secretary talk about having to revisit and look again at the rail lines that have been pulled out. There have been hundreds and hundreds of miles pulled out of my riding and the roadbed has even been torn up. Therefore I do not think any government is going to put those rail lines back in to haul freight and so on.

Government Orders

I would like to know if the federal government is contacting the provincial government to influence the provincial government to ensure that our rail line is not abandoned. It services farmers, the distillery bringing corn in and liquor out, and there is a major tourism effort in that area. That rail line is important to us and I am concerned that it is going to go.

Is the parliamentary secretary and the government able to influence in any way the retention of that rail line?

Ms. Judy Sgro: Madam Speaker, I suggest that the hon. member bring this specific issue to the attention of the Minister of Transport and get his comments directly back from him.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Madam Speaker, when my colleague, the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, the transport critic for the Bloc Québécois and himself a former mayor, told me that Bill C-26 changed the role and mandate of the Canadian Transportation Agency, I was extremely curious to know whether the bill in question could in any way improve things for my fellow citizens.

I became interested in this bill because in my riding of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve—which I have been representing here since 1993—there is a railroad track near Moreau Street in the east end of Montreal and a shunting yard. For many years I have frequently and periodically received representations from people who live near the track and who obviously find it a nightmare.

I will have an opportunity to explain this later, but I think that CN/CP rail is a very bad corporate citizen. It is truly unbelievable. The management style and corporate behaviour at CN/CP rail should be looked at by us as legislators. It is high time to call them to order.

CN/CP rail acts as though economic development should be the only consideration, quality of life is not important and it does not matter where railroad tracks are located.

When my constituents made representations to me, I suggested to them that they form a citizen's committee. We know how governments react to these sorts of disputes. Sometimes they are blind, but they are never deaf. They go where there is noise. I soon realized that to make any headway in a case like this, it was important to form a citizen's committee.

This was done. There are a dozen or so people who are active members of this committee. I would like to thank them for their involvement. I will mention their names so that if you ever happen to meet them, you will know who they are. They are: Léopol Bourjoi, Gaétane Couture, Maurice Lahaie, Michel Languedoc, Victor Berthelot, Lina Gauthier, Guy Walman, Robert Dalpé and his wife Olga Berseneff, and Martin Mercier.

They live in the east end of Montreal near a railway track and it is sheer hell.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Railway track, as in “voie de chemin de fer”.

Mr. Réal Ménard: People back home call it “une traque” in French, but they are not as erudite as the Minister for International

Trade. They say “une traque”, but it is true that the proper term in French is “une voie ferrée”.

These people are experiencing a veritable nightmare, a veritable hell. When cities were being planned in the last century, people were not always as concerned about having separate residential and industrial areas. It was believed that people should be able to live near their place of work and be able to get there on foot.

Obviously this type of urban planning no longer has any currency. Nobody today would accept having big, polluting companies in their residential neighbourhood, nor would they accept having a railway line.

The railway is closely linked to the port of Montreal. Economic development is at stake, and this cannot be ignored. I can understand this. East Montreal needs to have some prosperity. It was a manufacturing district from the 19th century until the 1960s and now services, such as Vidéotron, Mediacom and other companies, are setting up there.

However, we must not sacrifice quality of life in the name of economic development.

• (1625)

The advantage of Bill C-26 is that it will allow the Canadian Transportation Agency to hear complaints about railway companies that are guilty of making too much noise.

Allow me to explain the situation of the people I referred to a moment ago. First, there are five trains per day that leave at all hours. That means that there may be a train entering or leaving the rail yard at 3 a.m. Obviously, it is hard not to hear it when a train stops or starts. The average train has three or four engines and any number of railway cars. It affects the quality of life of people, and we need to be concerned with this.

When I met with CN-CP representatives, they were intransigent and told me that one of the factors of economic development—and I believe I have heard the Minister for International Trade say this—is just in time delivery. It means that deliveries have to arrive when requested.

An hon. member: It's “juste à temps” in French.

Mr. Réal Ménard: Right, it is “juste à temps”, but they said it in English. Perhaps they thought it demonstrated their superiority in some way, but I was not impressed. However, I wanted to quote them properly.

Therefore, I met with the officials of this railway, a private company that is not, I might add, subject to the Environmental Assessment Act. I would have liked to see Bill C-26 make CN-CP subject to this legislation so that we could look into their actions and network expansions and, naturally, monitor pollution.

Government Orders

That said, there are five trains passing or entering the station and going to the shunting yard. There are maintenance problems; proper braking is a problem; schedules are not adhered to. As a result, there is noise pollution for local residents, who have raised their families in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve and who, for generations, have been living with this major inconvenience.

Obviously, we could ask why the municipality allowed a housing development near a railway facility. Obviously, the question arises. It happened under the Doré administration.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: What party did he support?

Mr. Réal Ménard: I do not know what the Minister for International Trade thinks about the Doré administration; some people thought it did a good job, others did not. But the fact is that we do not accept, nor will we accept in the future that, under the pretext of economic development, some of our fellow citizens should be deprived of quality of life.

Equipment is defective and schedules are not being adhered to. When the residents and I went to meet with railway officials—I repeat, a community committee was established—we tried to reach some solutions. Perhaps an anti-noise barrier or a wall could help? Should the railway not set aside some funds for measures aimed at noise reduction?

Do not think, Madam Speaker, that we met with a good corporate citizen who expressed the desire to help his fellow man. I sensed an authoritative attitude, authoritative-sounding legal language. I told them. I even indicated that if I did not sense an openness on their part, I would mobilize the population to file a class action suit, as permitted under Quebec's Civil Code.

They answered me in a haughty, self-important and even disdainful manner. However, I stayed calm, as usual, and said that if we had to take it as far as a class action, they did not stand a chance of winning. In their smug way, they replied that they had good lawyers, that they could defend themselves, and that they could afford to go to court. We know what that means: months and months of stress for the plaintiff.

We will not be swayed by this kind of talk. I too know lawyers. We are going to mobilize people, and then make sure that reason prevails. It is not true that we have to be deprived of our quality of life because we live in a large urban centre like Montreal. It is not true that the development of Montreal harbour will require disregarding the demands of our fellow citizens.

• (1630)

This does not mean that we do not want industries on the east side of Montreal. Many factors can contribute to the development of that area, as the Minister for International Trade knows; we have four subway stations, qualified labour, community groups very dedicated to the people, public schools providing good service, Ontario street. There are many reasons for business people to want to have their offices in our area.

Vidéotron is an example. Bas Iris, a company which received grants under HRDC's program, is another.

But as I said, we will not accept that businesses be allowed to operate 24 hours a day. There has to be a limit. They must realize that they cannot operate all day and all night long. People might not object to operations starting at 7 a.m., but would it not be reasonable to expect them to end by 9:30 or 10 p.m.?

When we are at home, we do not expect to receive telephone calls at 10 p.m. We expect to get some rest after a hard day's work. It is the same for our fellow citizens. They do not want to be disturbed by noise coming from trains. This is a legitimate demand.

The government took too long to introduce this bill. But at least it did so, and I think this is a positive thing.

I do not own a car. I am a person that has a green side. To some, I have a pink side, but to others I have a green side. I do not own a car, which means that I always rely on public transit. I take the train to come to Ottawa.

I do not know whether there are other members of this House who travel by train, but when we travel on Via Rail's trains, whether it is in the winter, summer, spring or fall, there are significant delays. This happens frequently and it is unfair, because when we are on the train and expect to arrive in Ottawa at 10 a.m., but only get here at 2 p.m., we may miss oral question period. As we all know, a person cannot plan his schedule based on a service that is so bad that he reaches his destination three or four hours late.

What do the people at Via Rail tell us when we ask them about this? They tell us that they are not responsible for this situation, because the rails that they use belong to CN-CP. However, CN-CP does not want to make the necessary investments to make these rails functional and to ensure that the signal system allows trains to arrive "just in time" at their destination.

Therefore, we must call back to order the very bad corporate citizen that CN-CP is. I will ask the Bloc Québécois critic on transport issues, the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, to call the residents of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, who are creating the anti-noise committee, as witnesses. I will ask the committee to obtain explanations for the government's refusal to provide the quality of life that people are entitled to.

Do not think that such things happen just in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. I have been contacted by the residents of Côte-Saint-Luc. CN-CP is also a very poor corporate citizen in other provinces as well, believing that anything is allowed in the name of economic development.

I am told that residential areas have the same problems in the lower St. Lawrence area, the Gaspé, Matapédia and Mont-Joli, and this has gone on far too long already.

Bill C-26 will, therefore, provide a mechanism for handling complaints and I feel that it is a very good thing that is it being proposed to us, and that the people will be able to make their views heard.

Government Orders

The bill includes changes relating specifically to rail transportation. Among these, it provides for the creation of a mechanism for dealing with complaints concerning noise resulting from the construction or operation of railways. This is vitally important to the people of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

This is not a problem that has just popped up out of nowhere.

• (1635)

I saw correspondence from the late Jean-Claude Malépart, former member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

Since the late 1970s, regardless of party affiliation, all members elected to represent the east end of Montreal here, in the House of Commons, made representations to CN-CP. Unfortunately, they got no results. The problems were always the same: no respect for quality of life, excessive noise and the pursuit of economic development without any consideration for the legitimate aspirations of people.

We will not miss this opportunity to apprise the Minister of Transport of the current situation in the east end of Montreal. I am eager to see how this complaint mechanism will work.

I can assure the House that those people from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve whom I mentioned earlier will follow the work of the parliamentary committee very closely. They will make a request to appear before the committee. I hope that we will be able to bring a corporate citizen like CN-CP to its senses.

The world has changed since the days of Émile Zola. We are no longer in the 19th century, in the era of industrial capitalism where corporate citizens were granted every privilege for the sake of economic development. This situation no longer exists.

Today, when we think about urban development, we want to make a distinction between economic development and quality of life. If we have a choice to make between the two, as legislators, we must choose quality of life. We have only one life to live and there is no reason that we should agree to live it in appalling conditions.

We will attend the committee meetings. Gone are the days when the anarchy of economic development took precedence over the rights of residents of the east end of Montreal.

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to address this issue today. First let me say that from some of the questions asked earlier, that lack of vision comes through over and over again. We have a government that really does not have its act together. The government jumps from pillar to post. It never thinks long term.

I will give some examples of what I see in the transportation bill and why I feel the way I do. First, when it comes to dealing with the Kyoto issue, as our member mentioned, there is no mention of Kyoto at all yet we are talking about reducing carbon dioxide emissions, the use of carbon based fuels, by 20% per individual across this whole country, man, woman and child.

Transportation is one of the major producers. About 37% of the carbon dioxide released comes from transportation. With this key issue facing our country, facing our industries, we have a

government that does not deal with it in its transportation legislation. The bill is a total failure.

Kyoto is not in effect yet. Right now about 100 countries represent 43% of the emissions. The protocol does not come into effect until we hit 55% of the emissions, representing of course enough countries.

There is also a stipulation in section 3 of the Kyoto accord that by January 2005 we must show substantial reductions in CO₂. In Canada we have a real problem, because in 1999 we were 15% over the 1990 levels. We have agreed to get to 6% below the 1990 levels between 2008-12. In 1999 we were 15% over. By 2000 we were 20% over. Now, in 2003, we are 23% over. By 2008 when this comes into effect, we are going to be about 30% over. We are going in the wrong direction.

What the government fails to understand is that once it is ratified, and that is all dependent on Russia, the Kyoto accord says that within six months there must be a meeting of all those countries. They then have six months to decide on what the penalties will be. Since the European Union is dominating this because nobody else really is a part of it, it is saying it will introduce, through the WTO, sanctions on those countries that have not shown a reduction in CO₂.

A person does not have to be very bright to figure out that this means us. Our emissions going up and Kyoto says that by 2005 a country's emissions must be going down and countries must show that they are doing things to bring emissions down. This is so the IPCC bureaucrats in New York can say, "Yes, they have a plan".

With transportation being the biggest producer of CO₂, would we not think that the government would be starting to think that 2005 is not very far away and we had better have a plan? Yet there is no mention of it at all. The government totally ignores this very major item. I have to assume, then, that the government has no intention of living up to its Kyoto commitments, that it was just a political move to make the Prime Minister feel good in Johannesburg in saying, "Yes, count us in, we are one of the guys, but we are not going to live up to it".

The Auditor General said that we have had 200 other international agreements on the environment that we have not lived up to, so why should this one be any different? However, there will be penalties. How is the government going to deal with that and what will Canadians think when that happens?

The way we are going to deal with it is that we will be forced to buy emissions credits. We will buy those credits from all the countries that have them. The government has guaranteed a cap of \$15 per tonne. Where will the money come from to buy these emissions credits?

Government Orders

•(1640)

Obviously there is only one source. If the government is guaranteeing that price, the only source, then, is the taxpayer and that comes in the form of a carbon tax. We will have to tax the carbon used to make electricity and heat our homes and used for transportation. Would we not think that the government would have dealt with that issue in a transportation bill? If the government had any kind of foresight at all, it should have been there. Either one department does not know what the other department is doing or, as I say, the government has no intention of living up to Kyoto.

What should we be doing? Let me repeat that obviously we should do something. We should have a plan. We should be looking at conservation, transitional fuels and alternate energy. To develop all of those things we need leadership to work with industry, with the provinces and with the world. What are we doing? We are frigging around with a bill that has nothing to do with it, that does not even deal with the issue. I do not think that says very much for the government and its real commitment to the environment and certainly to dealing with the issue of transportation.

I would like to deal with a couple of other areas of the bill. Let me start by looking at VIA Rail. The members who have spoken are more aware of what the committee has done in looking at this whole issue, but I found it very interesting when the parliamentary secretary said that we will just put the railways back in. We have spent 20 years taking them out, but now we will just put them back in.

I can only speak from the example in my own city, where we now have a freeway and major business development where the railway used to be. The government encouraged and promoted getting rid of the railway. Now the member across the way says we are going to have to put the railway back in. I question whether any of the landlords who own that land are going to be that enthused about knocking down the buildings, removing the freeways and infrastructure and putting the railway back into downtown, nor will they be wherever in Canada. I think it was pretty flippant of her to answer in that way.

Second, when we talk about creating a crown corporation out of VIA Rail, that is going backward. That is again a belief that government-run anything will work more efficiently than private enterprise. This also means that VIA Rail is going to start competing with private enterprise like the Rocky Mountaineer, for instance, where VIA is planning to run a rail line across Vancouver, and with WestJet, which this rail line will supposedly replace. For any members who care about jobs and the environment, it would seem to me logical that they would want the free enterprise system to operate and not depend upon taxpayers to keep it alive. I cannot believe that having VIA Rail as a crown corporation is going to help anyone, except to eliminate the competition and thus encourage inefficiency and all we see with that sort of ownership.

Again the bill simply fails bitterly when it looks at solutions like crown corporations for something like VIA Rail. If VIA Rail cannot make it, I think we should ask why. We certainly should not be supporting it so it can compete with other industry.

Next I will look at grain transportation. Certainly our critic for agriculture would have a lot more to say about this than I do, but I will say that the farmers in my constituency are certainly not happy with the way grain is being moved.

•(1645)

First, the rail lines have been removed and they now have to truck their grain sometimes long distances. They have to pay for that. Sometimes it is on roads that have not been repaired for many years and which were not designed for the heavy duty equipment that is now being used to haul grain.

As well, the government has done nothing to get the Vancouver port open. The grain is piling up on farms. There are many farms where the grain has been sitting for months now, unable to move because the port of Vancouver has been closed and it must go through Prince Rupert.

It is fine that some say that is okay because they had a very small crop and they should be able to get it all gone by July. A lot of farmers have told me that they do not want to borrow money to get them through the next few months. They do not want to borrow money to seed their crops and take their chances. They want to sell that grain. They want it transported and they want their storage facilities empty. That is what they want. The government has done nothing to address or to help solve that problem.

As I said our critic for agriculture, who has said an awful lot about it already, would have a lot more to say about the plight of the farmers in western Canada.

Let me talk about the roads. There we have a real big problem. Right across the country our infrastructure is in big trouble. Our highways are in big trouble. They are full of potholes.

A group of truckers came to my office a year or so ago and said, "Our equipment has increased in size dramatically, the weight of the equipment and the loads being carried have increased. Do you know what kind of bridges we are driving over? We are driving over bridges that were built in 1950 and 1955". The next time members go on a bridge on one of our highways, they should look at the plaque on it and see when it was built. The truckers said that the infrastructure is becoming dangerous. It seems to me this is a definite transportation problem that the government should be dealing with.

What has happened? The concept of taxing for the repair of roads was a good idea, but what has happened to that money? If we look at it, in the budget the government has collected \$4.8 billion in federal fuel excise taxes. It has also collected tax on tax because it charges GST on the full price of gasoline or diesel fuel. The GST collected amounts to \$2.2 billion. That is \$7 billion that has been collected in tax by the federal government. The surprising part is that \$300 million annually is put back into road infrastructure. The government collects \$7 billion and it puts \$300 million back into the infrastructure.

Government Orders

A lot of people do not really understand, and I certainly do not either, what \$1 billion is. I had it described best for me at a conference I attended: \$1 million is like 21 days in time and \$1 billion is like 31 years in time. If \$1 million is 21 days and \$1 billion is 31 years, and we are talking about \$7 billion being collected and \$300 million being spent, where did the rest of the money go? If the government has spent only 4% on infrastructure, then 96% has gone into general revenue so the government can brag that it has a balanced budget, that it has a surplus and so on. There is something very wrong with that.

Let us look at what the provinces do with their taxes on transportation, gas and diesel fuel. We will find that 91% of the money collected by the provinces is put back into transportation.

• (1650)

The federal government puts in 4% and provincial governments put in 91%. There is a real problem here and it is one Canadians should be really annoyed about. If Canadians want any kind of a break in terms of taxes, obviously they would rather have the money go into infrastructure if it actually went there, but it does not. It does not go to help that infrastructure.

It was interesting too that when I asked the question about toll roads, on February 25, the minister said he thought it would be a good idea to reduce congestion in our big cities by charging tolls to keep cars off the roads and out of the downtowns of our major cities. The answer I got to my question was that it was a municipal issue. Why is the minister commenting on it if it is a municipal issue? Obviously people should communicate with each other. My next question would be, did they talk to the cities and the provinces, or was that just something that came out of the blue? It appears the minister probably has not put much thought into a lot of what the bill is about.

In terms of roads and transportation facilities in our country, it is embarrassing that they are in the state they are in and that they are being mismanaged the way that they are.

As well, many constituents have talked to me about air security and the airline business. Those of us from western Canada get to ride a plane a lot more than members from Ontario or Quebec do. We get to fly at least four hours each way every week. Many people change planes a few times.

In the airports there is a concern about security. Obviously the Americans are concerned and the British are concerned, as are the French, but we do not seem to be all that concerned. We have collected \$24 on tickets, which is now down to \$14. I am still worried about security, not so much when the passenger goes through, but what about all those people who clean and supply the planes? I have not noticed much change in that security. People want us to make sure that we guarantee that sort of security.

In conclusion, the government has failed in the bill. It has failed to deal with the very real prospects of Kyoto and what it might mean to the transportation industry. It has failed in its plan to deal with VIA Rail and to make it a crown corporation and compete with other private enterprise businesses. It has failed the farmers in terms of getting their grain to market. It has failed the citizens who drive our roads and the truck drivers who are forced to drive them every day

with their potholes and cracks. It has failed to put the 96% it collects for roads back into the infrastructure. It would rather use it somewhere else. I believe it has also failed in air safety.

The government has failed. For the first time since I have been here, since 1993, I have really been embarrassed to be here. That is largely because of what has happened in the last little while and what is probably going to happen tonight. I am a pretty proud Canadian. I am glad to be a Canadian, but I am really disappointed.

It is interesting because I wanted to know where my constituents actually stood on the issue. I asked them in a professional questionnaire, if Iraq fails to disarm and if the United Nations fails to act to enforce disarmament, should Canada join with our traditional allies, Australia, Great Britain and the United States, in military action against Iraq to ensure disarmament or not? This was a scientific poll. The answer was that 59% said yes and 38% said no. My constituents want me to represent them on that issue. They want a government that has a vision and that cares. I do not believe this government does and I am embarrassed.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, The Environment; the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, Taxation.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague's remarks. I am having a very hard time trying to understand the Canadian Alliance's position.

On the one hand, they are asking that the government invest in grain transportation in western Canada. They are asking it to take action with respect to air transportation. On the other hand, a member of the Canadian Alliance Party confirmed to me this afternoon that they are totally against regulating transportation.

I gave my hon. colleague from the Canadian Alliance the example of bus transportation in my region, which is regulated. We get great service at an affordable price. Our bus transportation system is regulated, which means that paying routes are earmarked for the Orléans Express company, enabling it to provide in my region services which are important to our community.

As I said earlier, this is pretty much all we have left in our region for transportation. We know that there are currently companies calling for the deregulation of bus transportation, even in our region. Deregulation would simply spell the end of this mode of transportation for us.

Government Orders

At present, there is hardly any rail transportation in our region, and air transportation is not doing any better, with Air Canada being in difficulty and abandoning regional airports, lines which, incidentally, are said not to be profitable, when the planes are consistently full and airfares cost a fortune. I fly between Mont-Joli and Ottawa, and it costs me more than \$1,000 just in airfare.

I would like the hon. member to clarify the Canadian Alliance's position. Does the Canadian Alliance want the federal government to take action to help, as he said among other things, western producers ship their grain? This would require the government to invest in transportation. Would the hon. member agree to the federal government investing not only in the transport of goods in his region, but also in the transport of passengers in a region like mine?

• (1700)

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills: Mr. Speaker, obviously I am not the person to answer all of the detailed questions, but let me give the hon. member the answer I would like to give.

The major point is that 96% of the money taken in taxation does not go back into transportation. It should all go back there. That is what it is collected for. I believe we need intelligent regulation. That means there are isolated areas that do need assistance to be serviced if they are not competitive otherwise. That sort of help is needed. I have areas like that. They are all over the country. With no regulation we obviously would have great service from Vancouver to Toronto but not much to the smaller parts of the country. We have to be reasonable about that.

The big thing we need is intelligence, understanding and recognition of what the problems are and to deal with them in that way.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from the Bloc, I was a little at a loss to hear the comments from the member, but I will target a slightly different area.

My colleague from Red Deer indicated that transportation is the biggest producer of CO₂ and that the government was nowhere on the Kyoto issue in addressing it. Yet for months, if not years on end since I have been here, I have listened to Alliance member after Alliance member go on about how CO₂ emissions are not the issue related to greenhouse gas, that they are not the problem and that all the work everybody was supporting on the Kyoto issue was not really necessary.

Quite frankly, when the hon. member talks about the need for intelligent legislation, I agree. We also have the need for intelligent discussion. For the first time, I have to say, I heard some extremely intelligent comments related to CO₂ emissions, Kyoto and transportation from an Alliance member and it is deeply appreciated.

Mr. Bob Mills: Mr. Speaker, obviously I could suggest to the member that she might want to get *Hansard* from November. There are enough pages there that she should be able to find our position fairly clearly.

Our position is clearly that transportation is one of the major producers of CO₂, and that is a fact. I am saying that the bill does not deal with that. It does not deal with anything about Kyoto or CO₂. What it should deal with is how we can encourage the transportation

system to deal with the CO₂ Kyoto problem. We have committed to something and we should deal with conservation, if that is possible, in transportation, transitional fuels and alternate energy.

The government should have a long term vision for that. That is what it is all about and that is our position on it. I cannot make that clearer.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, when I was mayor of the City of Saint John, I had an opportunity to go to Germany and we went from one location to another by train. That was quite a few years ago. Germany knew then that people should go by train. The problem we have and what we are trying to deal with through Kyoto, Germany was dealing with it then. I found that in other countries as well.

What happened to us back in 1993? We had VIA Rail which took our people to Quebec and then they would change over to another train to bring them either to Toronto or Ottawa. The train was taken away from us yet Saint John had the largest ridership of any of the train stations in all New Brunswick. However it was taken away because of politics. It was a shame.

Does the hon. member think the government honestly understands the need to put the train in every part of Canada like Germany has?

• (1705)

Mr. Bob Mills: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree that trains would help the CO₂ problem. However there is a major difference between Germany and Canada. For one thing, Germany is not as cold. Second, they are much closer together. Third, there is a lot bigger population.

I have a daughter who lives in Germany and obviously she takes the train everywhere. She does not really need a car. That would be the ideal situation. There is a train every hour to Berlin which she can take.

Here we took the rail lines out and cancelled VIA Rail. We used to have VIA Rail between Edmonton and Calgary and it stopped in Red Deer. Obviously, now with the price of gas, the train would be used but we took out the rail lines. They are not there anymore. That is the problem and that is the problem that I have with transportation not having a long term vision.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member. He referred to \$1 billion in his speech and wondered what the government did with it. I think it all went into the firearm act and kind of got wasted.

There is the transportation legislation and bill. There is an agreement with the Canadian Wheat Board and the Liberal government over the fact that it is supposed to contract 50% of the grain that is to be hauled in the next year. The Canadian Wheat Board is trying to renege on that. Our Wheat Board minister is doing absolutely nothing to ensure that the Wheat Board lives up to that agreement. I think he is just saying that it must be run by the farmers.

Government Orders

Should the Wheat Board live up to its agreements? Does he want to comment on the Wheat Board minister still dragging farmers through the courts for exporting their wheat across the border?

Mr. Bob Mills: Mr. Speaker, first, of course the corruption that occurs in Ottawa, the waste of money, is dramatic. We thought it would be quite bad but it is worse than most of us ever thought, a billion dollars here and a billion dollars there. Obviously that is where the \$7 billion collected for transportation went. It is easy to waste it when it is done the way it is here.

As far as the Wheat Board is concerned, it is unanimous that people want a choice in terms of transporting grain. They sure are not very impressed with going to jail for trying to take their grain and market it wherever they can sell it. The Wheat Board is failing totally to move grain out of my area and most of western Canada.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in light of some of the debate we have heard already today, it will be a truly enjoyable experience speaking to Bill C-26.

We do not often have the opportunity to support legislation with which the government comes forward. I am happy to say at this point in time that we intend to support Bill C-26. We look forward to the bill going to committee where we will have the opportunity to discuss it more thoroughly and ensure that what the government has put in the bill is really upfront with what it suggests it will do. I do want to indicate that and I have indicated that to the minister as well.

The bill is an attempt by the minister to right some of the wrongs that the government has done for the last number of years. I want to emphasize that these wrongs were followed through as a result of bad actions, deregulation overall and the whole idea that a marketplace, capitalistic approach was the only way to go within the transportation industry. I want to emphasize that the Liberal government's agenda was supported wholeheartedly by the Reform party and now the Alliance Party.

My colleague from Red Deer spoke today about understanding the need for differences throughout the country, and I am glad to hear that. In reality that is not the message the Alliance Party has brought to the House time and time again on numerous issues.

New Democrats, and even Canadians who are not New Democrats, do not believe for one second that a marketplace attitude is necessary in every aspect of building a nation. It is certainly not necessary in every aspect of transportation, not if we are going to do things to benefit the entire country and do things to address the different geographical aspects of this nation.

Initially it was just men who had a vision for Canada and they realized that as part of that vision they had to recognize the different geography of Canada and the differences in the provinces. They realized that some commitments had to be made as a whole to benefit all regions of Canada.

The rail line that brought our nation together was done with one area putting a little more out than another because it was nation building. We have to look at things differently with regard to transportation, if we are to meet the needs of a country from coast to coast.

I will use Nunavut, the territories and Yukon as a major thrust of this because they do not have the road system that the rest of the country has because they are newly developed areas of Canada. As a nation, are we going to tell Nunavut and the territories that they have to pay for it all themselves because the Government of Canada believes that the transportation system of tomorrow should remain largely market driven where the government sets a competitive framework and intervenes only as a last resort? In spite of that, I suggest that we support the legislation at this time and deal with some of the issues in committee.

However the government is still saying that a marketplace economy is the only thing it will look at. I suggest that cannot be done in a nation such as Canada because there are certain areas of Canada that cannot offset those costs. We cannot just deal with the issues of marketplace and making profits.

To my colleagues from the Alliance, from the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are dealing with issues right now with regard to the additional cost for trucking their grain and other farm products as a result of rail lines being taken out. I hope farmers and people in rural Saskatchewan and Manitoba are listening. The issues and hardships they are dealing with are a direct result of the Alliance Party and the Reform party pushing for a market driven economy. There is no question that they are a direct result of the Alliance pushing and the Liberals saying "We are going to do what they want because this is really a right wing agenda and it is what we want to do anyway".

● (1710)

In the history of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, people worked together. People did that in rural communities. They had to work together for the benefit of each other. In the early years people got together to build homes and farms. They helped each other out when there was a disaster. If someone could not get his crops in on time and another person was done, they rallied together to do the job.

The promotion that has come out of the Reform and Alliance Party is if it is more costly for farmers to get grain from White Fox, Saskatchewan, they will have to pay more than the farmer right along the American border. We do not want that one farmer along the border to get less profit because he is that much closer to maybe shipping it across the border. We work together in a co-operative spirit to ensure fair marketing for everyone. That was what we did as communities.

The reason I mention that is because my colleague from Red Deer talked like he believed it when he talked about transportation policy. It is necessary to recognize there are some differences in different communities, We are not going to be able to have a profitable line that runs from Montreal to Toronto or to Ottawa. We have to recognize there is greater opportunity for profit in those areas and we will have to offset that somewhere else. I agree with that. I just quite frankly do not agree that we should be building a transportation system within our country based upon profit alone. That service should be there for all Canadians.

Government Orders

In my five years here in Ottawa, time and time again we have dealt with the crisis in the airline industry, a crisis that was that much worse because we had a situation where companies were out strictly to make a profit. There were threats of anti-competitive actions. They were out strictly to make a profit with no consideration of providing service to the smaller communities, to smaller regions on the east coast and the smaller regions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. As a result, we had this action where we want to make a profit, be the biggest and have everything. We lost one major airline in this country. The others are at major risk. Then when another crisis happens, it is just that much worse because everything is being done purely because we think there should be a marketplace approach.

That is wrong for any nation that has any kind of a vision to provide services. I believe the entire country, every business and every person living in a community, benefits from an officially run transportation service and one that is there providing service throughout. I do not think every person who hits the airport should have to pay an additional fee as an airport improvement fee. I do not believe everyone who drives on a road should have to pay a toll charge. Even though others are not on that road or in that airport, they benefit from access to those services and by others having access to those services. Whether that means other business people can come in and work in their community or sell their products in their community, we all benefit, and that is what it is about.

I mentioned that I support this bill and I want to talk about a couple of the key points in the bill. There is no way I can get into all of it. It is an omnibus bill and it deals with a lot of issues. I do not agree with everything in the bill but I believe this is an attempt by the minister to right some of the damaging wrongs that have happened in the past, and I am acknowledge that.

One key issue mentioned in the bill, as my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve previously mentioned, is the issue of train noise. It has been an ongoing thing that I dealt with as our transportation critic. My colleague from Vancouver East has had numerous related issues in her riding regarding train noise. There was absolutely no recourse for anyone. Can members imagine having something in place where the noise creates such a problem for the residents around an area but there is absolutely no recourse, no type of mediation process or anything that can be done with the rail lines to address the problem for those citizens who have a problem with it?

• (1715)

The bill actually looks at addressing that, to the point where it indicates that there will be a mediation process as well, that the CTA will be given some teeth to deal with it. That is an absolute plus. It might seem like nothing to most people. For the people who do not live by the rail line it is no big deal, but it has been a major issue in many parts of the country and I was pleased to see it addressed.

My colleagues from the Alliance talk about VIA Rail being made a crown corporation. The bottom line is that the process for VIA Rail would be to have it operate as a crown corporation to give it the opportunity, as that corporation, to borrow money from alternative sources, so that we can put in place a much better passenger rail system in Canada, so that we can meet the needs of Saint John, New Brunswick, and so that we can continue to meet the needs of the line

going up to Churchill where there is no other mode of land transportation. In Manitoba, from Thompson to Churchill there is no other land transportation for people, and for some other smaller communities as well. VIA Rail has provided that service, sometimes in conjunction with other rail lines. It has provided that service and we need to ensure that this service is maintained.

I think VIA does need to be given that opportunity. Quite frankly, my concern on the issue of VIA Rail was the point made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services when she said that we are not looking to privatize VIA Rail yet. I will actually pull up her comments, because it was pretty clear that there was sort of this intent to privatize VIA Rail. I have a serious problem with that. Even private rail lines in other parts of the world have had to get government support. There is not a single passenger rail service in the world, not one in the entire world, that does not operate without government support. We can mickey mouse around with it and hide the support, whether it ends up as giving them the money for the infrastructure or some grants to do something, but the bottom line is that they do not operate without government support.

I would much rather that we not put our passenger rail service in the same type of situation as our airline service because somehow there is this push that we have to privatize it. What would I like to see? I want to see high speed rail between the densely populated areas in Quebec and Ontario. I think Canadians should be supporting that kind of approach, because it is beneficial for the entire country. We would be getting a lot of cars off the roads and giving people the opportunity to travel where they do not have to be involved, not just because of the CO₂ emissions, which is highly important, but it also would give them the opportunity to not have the stress of travelling on some of those congested highways. Again it is crucially important that we support our entire country.

Quite frankly, as for me benefiting from the number of times I am going to hop on that rail service, I do not see it as a big thing, but it certainly would be extremely beneficial for the people in Quebec and Ontario. I suggest that it would give the opportunity to people from the east coast, should we improve that rail service again, to also be part of that. Once again we would be working to join our country together and make rail a much more efficient system.

As a last note, as I have a smidgen of time left, so in line with a doublespeak sort of approach by the government, there is this situation. As we talk about improving rail service and the need to get trucks and cars off the roads so that we do not have to put more money into highway infrastructure, or at least keep the costs down, we have a situation in Windsor where there actually is a rail tunnel. The municipality, from what I understand, wanted to improve that system. They wanted to improve the use of the tunnel and support that process. That was the municipality's approach to it. Then we had three Conservative bureaucrats from transportation in the Province of Ontario get together with three federal government bureaucrats and they decided they would pull out that tunnel, that they would not keep that rail tunnel. This is their approach. They are going to pull out that tunnel from the absolutely busiest trade corridor in Canada. They are going to take away the rail tunnel and stuff things back up on the roads.

Government Orders

What is wrong with that approach? It is that kind of hypocritical attitude and approach that has everyone wondering where we are really going. This is why I say I support the bill before us, but I certainly want to be actively involved in our committee process to make sure that what is there is accurate.

• (1720)

We have to stay on the government on an ongoing basis to make sure it is not getting away with some of this. I do not know what to call it. The government talks about improving rail service and getting cars and trucks off the roads, but on the busiest trade corridor it is going to pull out the rail and the tunnel. What can we call that? Quite frankly I call it absolute stupidity and I am sure there are other words for it as well. It is absolute foolishness, especially when the municipality was looking at enhancing that rail service, which is what we should be doing. The federal government should be supporting municipalities with additional funds to keep as much cargo as possible on the rail lines and off the roads.

The other point I will make is about the vision for transportation. "Straight Ahead" was the Department of Transport's title for their new vision on transportation. My thought was straight ahead and over the cliff, because we got this vision and then we had a federal budget with no money, not near enough money, to even look at implementing any kind of vision for transportation within Canada.

I think we will all agree with my colleague from the Alliance, who said that there absolutely has to be a long term strategy. Certainly I will. There cannot be a strategy for transportation policy in any aspect of the transportation sector or infrastructure in a country such as Canada without having a long term vision. I am not talking from budget to budget or even from one federal government to the next. If Canada as a country does not have a strategy that stretches over at least 10 to 20 years, we will be doomed to be fighting crisis after crisis within the transportation industry.

I am looking forward to seeing this legislation before the committee. I look forward to having more discussion on it, and I look forward to questions.

• (1725)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, being a Manitoba member of Parliament I am quite familiar with the politics of the member for Churchill. I will make one observation. When the Government of Canada owned Canadian National Railway, it became the most inefficient railway. It had the highest costs. It was bankrupting the country. In fact, it dragged the private company CP Rail down with it. It was privatized and CN Rail became the most dynamic railway in all of North America.

My question is in regard to the politics of this. The NDP seems to say that the Canadian Alliance is in a big battle with it, and we are, but let us look at the NDP as if it were in government. In fact, the NDP is the government of Manitoba.

This member is quite familiar with the Winnipeg Beach area, where there is a rail line that runs from Winnipeg to Gimli. Farmers use it for producer cars. The distillery uses it for hauling grain, corn and liquor. Tourists also use it.

That rail line is being abandoned. A private company is willing to take it over and run it but cannot because the NDP has legislation that makes it uneconomical for that private company to take it over.

The member for Churchill might ask what that legislation is. It is successors' rights legislation, which the NDP government refuses to give an exemption for. I would like the member to explain again how great an NDP government would be for private rail service when in fact the NDP government is showing by its actions that it will ruin the rail line in my area.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer as someone who comes out of the labour movement and totally supports successors' rights and recognizes that even the WTO has acknowledged that unions result in far better conditions within a country because they improve the wages people make. They improve the economic opportunities for small and medium sized businesses as a result of unionized wages. Quite frankly, within the province of Manitoba private firms operate very efficiently with unions in place.

Even with successors' rights in the province of Manitoba, for those who do not know, if a company takes over it will reach a point where it can renegotiate. Very few unions, if any, will not recognize and deal with it if a company is truly in economic hardship, very few. We see it right now with Air Canada employees looking at doing something differently. The CAW employees are recognizing that there is a struggle in the airline industry. They are looking to address it, possibly through wage concessions or in some other area. They know their jobs are on the line.

For the Alliance to suggest that successors' rights for unions is an issue as to why a private company cannot survive is just pure and simple hogwash.

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask if you might seek unanimous consent of the House to support merchant navy veterans in the form of my private member's bill, which is an act to establish merchant navy veterans day. I would ask that the House unanimously support the bill at second reading and in turn send it to committee at the next available sitting day.

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CANADA HEALTH ACT

The House resumed from February 11, 2003, consideration of the motion that Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Canada Health Act (linguistic duality), be now read a second time and referred to committee.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to take part in this extremely important debate on respecting Canada's linguistic duality in health care.

Many hon. colleagues have spoken, and opinions vary. My colleague, the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, talked about what Bill C-202 means to Manitobans. I would like to talk about the implications of this legislation for Franco-Ontarians.

The community I represent is very familiar with the debate on linguistic rights and health care. I would even say they are all too familiar with it. Most of my hon. colleagues know that Franco-Ontarians have had to fight tooth and nail over the past six years to assert their rights in health care. I am talking, naturally, about Montfort.

We learned a lot during the Montfort saga. I can only hope that the memory of this fight will force us to recognize the importance of Bill C-202. We cannot take our linguistic rights for granted: we must constantly defend them. We must be vigilant. We must add the sixth principle, to respect linguistic duality, to the Canada Health Act.

I want to repeat the chronology of events in the Montfort saga to illustrate the importance of learning from the past.

Six years ago, in February 1997, the Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission announced the closure of the Montfort Hospital, Ontario's only French language university hospital. Imagine the impact of that decision on the francophone community: no more hospital for francophones; no more on-the-job training for our health care professionals. From now on, everything would be done in English, would be translated, or would be done elsewhere than in Ottawa. This was a disastrous decision for our community.

Fortunately, the Franco-Ontarian community was quick to react. On March 22, 1997, one month after the commission's decision, that community rallied and unanimously asked the commission to reverse its decision. More than 10,000 people attended the rally to make their views known. The S.O.S. Montfort campaign had been launched just a few weeks earlier, but it was going full steam ahead with its slogan "Montfort, fermé: Jamais!".

Later that year, the commission reversed its decision, but it did not do so in good faith. According to the new decision, Montfort would remain open, but several of its essential services, including emergency and special services, would be eliminated. This was, of course, unacceptable. Discussions continued for a year, without success. Finally, in August 1998, the community, represented by S.O.S. Montfort, went to court to plead its case.

Like every other Franco-Ontarian, I was glad to hear, in November 1999, that the courts had ruled in favour of Montfort.

Private Members' Business

The Divisional Court of Ontario recognized that the closure of the Montfort hospital was unconstitutional. It was our first victory. I call it our "first" victory, because the Government of Ontario did not agree with the ruling and appealed it. Imagine. Ontario appealed the ruling. The community had to take up the fight again.

The Franco-Ontarian community persevered. There were great disappointments and memorable victories. It kept asserting its rights and was finally successful. On December 7, 2001, the Court of Appeal for Ontario confirmed the ruling handed down in November 1999.

Two months later, the Ontario government announced that it would not appeal that ruling. The Montfort hospital would not close its doors. Franco-Ontarians would maintain their right to health services in the official language of their choice.

● (1735)

The fight to keep Montfort has been long and hard. Let us keep that in mind. Why do we need to fight such battles to protect a right enshrined in the Constitution of our country, in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

There is one lesson to be learned from the battle over Montfort. We cannot rely on the government's good intentions. We need guarantees enshrined in the law of the land. As parliamentarians, we have to protect our official language communities. We need to add a sixth principle to the Canada Health Act, that of respecting Canada's linguistic duality in the delivery of health care services.

Let us vote in favour of Bill C-202.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak to Bill C-202.

I would like to begin by making a brief mention of my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, the man behind this bill. He is a man of good will and great intelligence, a real spokesperson, who has distinguished himself in his battles for the Franco-Ontarian minority community to which he belongs. I have a great deal of respect for him as a spokesperson for his community.

I am therefore sorry that I must oppose this bill. I will explain why I am opposed.

[English]

Let me start by reviewing the bill's provisions. It would add linguistic duality as a sixth provision of the Canada Health Act. There are currently five provisions in the Canada Health Act which the act states must be provided in provincial health services in order to receive federal funding. Those provisions are: portability, universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness and public administration. If any of those provisions are not followed then the result is that the federal government is supposed to, under the provisions of the Canada Health Act, withhold funding from provincial health spending. That means that the Canada Health Act can only be enforced by reducing the amount of money available for health care in this country.

Private Members' Business

That is a very blunt instrument for ensuring better health care. It means that the Canada Health Act ought to be used, and not be enforced through the reduction of funds, only in the most severe cases where some practice is so outrageous in its restriction on the health care rights of Canadians that it would result in a genuine loss of health care benefits. Otherwise, the enforcement itself would result in lesser qualities of health care, longer waiting lists and, in general, poorer health indeed. If it were enforced too strictly and too many funds withdrawn one could not unreasonably expect that there would be some fatalities caused by the over stringent enforcement of the act. Therefore, we must be extraordinarily cautious how we apply this law and how we consider rewriting the law.

The bill provides for some things that seem completely unobjectionable. I will read one of the parts of the law and it would be hard for anybody to object to this in principle. The proposed bill states:

12.1(b) the provincial health insurance plan shall offer insured health services in the language spoken by the members of the anglophone or francophone minority of the province, taking into account the organization of human, material and financial resources of the province's facilities that offer such services and, where applicable, in accordance with any program ensuring access...

That does not seem unreasonable. However, in the case of a piece of legislation like this it is necessary to take a step back and ask why is it only francophone and anglophone minorities that would get this kind of protection?

Let us think very carefully. In this place we have the right to speak either English or French and to have translation provided and documents provided for us because we represent the two largest language groups of the country, and the two languages that have always been in use in this country.

However, when we are talking about a life and death service we must take a somewhat different attitude. If we do find, as we do indeed, in parts of this country that there are large numbers of people who speak some other language and are really not capable of speaking either French or English, it seems reasonable to try to provide those life and death services, emergency medical services for example, in their language.

My colleague from Surrey Central made this point quite eloquently when he spoke of his own constituency, which has the largest Indo-Canadian community in the country. He pointed out that there are 35,000 people in Surrey Central for whom Punjabi is the mother tongue and 18,700 people in his constituency who use Punjabi as their home language. Many of those people would be fluently bilingual in English, but many would not. Something similar is true in Toronto for the large Chinese community, for the Chinese community in Vancouver, and one could go on and point out a number of other very substantial language groups.

There is a precedent here. In the court system there is a common law right that if individuals are involved in a court case either as plaintiffs or defendants and are incapable of speaking the language, translation services will be provided so that the goings on would not be a mystery. And that applies not merely to English and French speakers but also to speakers of any other language.

Something similar ought to be provided where possible. When people come to a hospital for emergency services, they are

frequently not in the best mental state. They are often stressed out. These are often not the conditions that would cause persons who are struggling to know either of Canada's official languages to be able to speak and convey clearly what their problems are and indeed to understand the information provided by service providers who do not have the capacity to speak their language.

• (1740)

That is one reason I think this is not a good piece of legislation for us to propose.

The other reason relates directly to what my hon. colleague from Ottawa—Orléans was saying in his comments. He talked specifically about the Montfort Hospital and how this relates to the Montfort Hospital. I listened with interest as someone who is a former patient of the Montfort Hospital. A few years back I was there for an operation. I was very satisfied with the service I received.

I think this piece of legislation deals very specifically with the case of the Montfort Hospital. Probably there are two or three other hospitals in Canada where this might apply. I am thinking of the hospital in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue and perhaps a couple in northern New Brunswick. What relates to these hospitals particularly is the following part of the proposed law, which I will read:

As soon as possible, the province—

—the provinces that are bound by this law—

—shall take action to ensure that the management of any facility in the province that offers insured health services is placed entirely in the hands of members of the province's anglophone or francophone minority, where the number of users from the anglophone or francophone minority is sufficient to warrant that action.

To be honest, I simply cannot see the value of this. The point of health care is to provide good health care. The point of placing someone in the role of being an administrator of health care services is to find the person most capable of providing those services, regardless of the community to which they belong and simply using merit as the principle.

I would not want to see, and unfortunately because of the way the Canada Health Act is written this inevitably would happen if it were added to the law, a situation in which the federal government would be forced, if it were to comply with the Canada Health Act, to enforce this provision of the law by withholding funds from the provinces because the administrators at various hospitals who had been appointed by the provinces were not people of the appropriate linguistic or ethnic group. That would be a very unwise thing to place in our law, given the nature of the Canada Health Act and the way it is administered. That is a very substantial problem with the law.

I want to say something else in relation to the whole question of conditions under the Canada Health Act. Perhaps we took a wrong turn when we put the five conditions in the Canada Health Act the way we did.

Private Members' Business

There is really one fundamental condition that ought to apply under the Canada Health Act. That is if the federal government is to provide money and it attaches conditions, the one condition ought to be simply that no Canadian can be deprived of quality services at an equal level to those provided by our public system to all other Canadians due to inability to pay and, I think the point has been quite well made by my hon. colleague, due to an inability to speak the relevant language of the provincial majority. I would say if one is to include that secondary right regarding languages, that right ought to include those individuals who cannot speak the majority language of the province or the other official language.

Delayed health care is health care denied. Health care that cannot be delivered due to a lack of capacity to communicate is also health care denied. That applies not merely to francophones and anglophones, but to all Canadians regardless of their linguistic background.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-202, introduced by my colleague, the member for Ottawa—Vanier. I congratulate him on his initiative.

The purpose of his bill is to amend the Canada Health Act in order to take linguistic duality into account. It would mean that the provinces would, as soon as possible, in cooperation with the facilities of the province that offer health services, develop a program ensuring access to health services for members of the province's anglophone or francophone minority and, in so doing, take account of the human, material and financial resources of each facility and the social, cultural and linguistic characteristics of the members of the public served by the facility.

The result would be that this would be placed entirely in the hands of members of the province's anglophone or francophone minority.

Like those of my colleagues who have spoken in the House on this bill, I acknowledge that the principle being pursued by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is a laudable one. The means he is using to achieve that principle, however, are not necessarily either desirable or optimal.

I do not believe that a Canadian law relating to health, an area of provincial jurisdiction, is going to go over very well with the people of Quebec.

In Quebec, we took a different approach, by passing bill 142 in 1986, which guarantees access to health care services in English throughout Quebec. Initiatives have already been taken in Quebec, and they have worked.

Like my colleagues, the members for Repentigny and Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, I do not believe that this country is bilingual, nor do I think that it can be. The efforts that have been made to make it bilingual have not produced the desired results. I would like to point out that only Quebec and New Brunswick have passed legislation on bilingualism and have demonstrated any real will to provide bilingual services to their residents.

Even though members here have been critical, at times, of bilingualism in Quebec, I believe that Quebec is ahead in this area

and that it has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate that it is very open when it comes to applying its laws.

While the principle may be laudable, this is not, as we see it, the right way to achieve the objective.

Also, the Canada Health Act, passed in 1984, was another example of interference by the federal government in an area of provincial jurisdiction. We will never accept any further intrusions into provincial jurisdiction.

Let us not forget that the Canada Health Act was passed at the very end of Pierre Elliott Trudeau's regime. Even though all of the federal political parties supported it, all of the provinces were against it. This new legislation would again encroach on provincial areas of responsibility.

I understand that the purpose is to provide French services for francophones living in minority communities. However, amending the Canada Health Act by making payment of the full cash contribution under the Canada Health and Social Transfer conditional, is not the solution. It is akin to blackmail.

It could have the effect of delaying or compromising care provided in different institutions, either in Quebec or in the provinces. It seems to me that all of the provinces should respect the principle of linguistic duality.

If negotiations and exchanges were proposed instead, which could be accepted by the federal government and the provinces, then we would be more inclined to support them over provisions contained in a federal act.

Personally, I recognize the provinces' right to determine how health care services will be delivered to their residents. I do not think that amending a federal statute, which would apply from coast to coast, will help us reach that goal.

Health care is a very complex sector that is facing significant cost increases with regard to the delivery of services, especially those related to the aging population.

Since it is specified in the bill that the province "shall take account of the human, material and financial resources", it is very possible that such amendment would never be implemented because there would be no financial resources available.

• (1750)

The member for Ottawa—Vanier knows how important the promotion of the French language is to me, but I am not sympathetic to his fight for linguistic duality as represented by his proposed amendment to the Canada Health Act.

Therefore, I must tell him that the Bloc Québécois will not support this bill mainly because it would mean allowing further federal intrusion into provincial jurisdictions. It is very difficult to talk about health and bilingualism in political terms but we often have no choice but to face that reality.

In conclusion, I congratulate the member for Ottawa—Vanier on his fight for bilingualism and I invite him to find other avenues than further intrusion in provincial jurisdictions to achieve that objective.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier for having introduced this bill.

I want to inform the House that the New Democratic Party will support this bill.

[*English*]

The proposal in the bill is quite simple. It is to bring in an amendment to the Canada Health Act to introduce a new principle, which is the right to be served in this bilingual country in the language with which one is most comfortable and most conveniently able to communicate.

There are only three parts to the bill. It is a directive that where there are sufficient resources, facilities be available in both the official languages; that where there are sufficient resources, all health services be available in both official languages; and where the community is primarily anglophone or francophone, that the control at the local level of the facilities and health services be in the hands of that community.

We almost have to stop and think about why we even have to do this. Do we not already have this right in Canada. The answer, obviously, because this bill is before this House, recognizes that we do not as a right have the ability to go into a hospital and use either of the official languages. We do not have the right to go into other health care facilities and use both of the official languages. That is the reality.

I want to make one particular point about the question of control and if the community is sufficiently of either anglophone or francophone constitution, that the board of the hospital or facility would reflect that community.

Just in the last month in my community in Windsor the board of directors of one of the hospitals have taken it upon themselves to finally engage in an active campaign to get members of the francophone community represented on that board of directors. The merged hospital has a history that is close to 100 years. For the first time, at the start of this century, they are actively trying to engage the francophone community, which is reasonably sizeable in the city and county around Windsor.

One cannot help but think that this type of legislation would say to other people who run hospitals that is something they would have to do on an ongoing basis and much more extensively than they have in the past.

There has been some suggestion that somehow this amendment to the Canada Health Act would lessen the quality of services. I am sure my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier does not intend that nor do I think there is any logical way that one could interpret that consequence from these amendments.

I would argue that by the very fact that we are a bilingual country, that we have large populations who speak both of the official languages, that we have large populations who speak both official languages who do not have available medical services in their official languages, that the quality of services are much more impacted by that reality.

My background is as a civil litigation lawyer. I did a lot of personal injury work. I know how important it is for people giving medical services to communicate as perfectly as possible with their patients so that the best diagnosis and the best treatment can be rendered.

● (1755)

Obviously if people speak one official language that is not available in that hospital or medical service area and they are trying to communicate in the other, they will not be able to do it nearly as effectively. That is simply a reality.

The quality of service argument is a red herring and, in fact, just the opposite would be true; the quality of service in the country overall would be heightened by having both official languages available to all citizens of the country.

I would like to make one other point and that is that within an historical context is it not time that we do this? Look at what we have done in providing services in other areas. We are entitled to be educated in one of the two official languages. We are entitled to have our legal services, both criminal and civil, available to us in our courts. We are entitled as members of the House to speak both languages. Is it not logical that the next step in that road to provide full services would be in the medical area?

The bill is not a complicated bill. It is quite straightforward in terms of an amendment to the act. I think even more important, it is time that we take this step forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jeannot Castonguay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the goals of Bill C-202, which was introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

The bill clearly stems from a concern for the future of linguistic minorities in Canada. I want members to know that the federal government shares this concern in every respect and supports official-language minority communities.

On March 12, 2003, and as a result of the commitment it made, in particular in the September 2002 throne speech, the federal government tabled its action plan on official languages, a concrete measure on behalf of official language minority communities.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs have announced the new Official Languages Action Plan, which I shall refer to as the action plan in this speech.

This action plan includes a \$119 million plus investment in health care, to implement positive steps such as the retraining and retention initiative for health professionals and a community networking initiative designed to improve access to services provided to minority communities in both official languages.

In addition, Health Canada reallocated a total of \$30 million from its Primary Health Care Transition Fund to improve access to services for official language minority communities.

The government strongly supports linguistic duality in Canada and the action plan clearly shows its commitment for the future.

The plan includes an accountability framework setting out how the commitments and obligations under the Official Languages Act are to be met.

The government is clearly committed to meeting its responsibilities, in addition to defining mechanisms for coordinating the policy and the new measures included in the action plan, meaning that Health Canada and official language minority communities will have real means of improving access to health care services.

Improving access to health care for official language minority communities and ensuring their viability are major priorities for Health Canada.

Health Canada's commitment is clear and has been demonstrated in many ways already, namely:

by funding various projects within these communities on its own initiative or in partnership with Canadian Heritage;

by funding the "Santé en français" forum in Moncton in November 2001, during which the francophone advisory committee made its report public;

and, finally, by funding various projects within these communities, on its own initiative or in partnership with Canadian Heritage. More than \$13.6 million has been allocated to official language minority communities over the past three years. This funding, taken from existing programs, was a response to requests made by the communities.

The action plan on official languages will help support the development of French and English language minority communities and will make health care services more accessible to them in their official language.

•(1800)

The action plan is proof of the federal government's support for official language minority communities. This action plan respects provincial and territorial jurisdictions and requires these governments to contribute to improving access to health services for official language minority communities in their own language.

As members know, under the Canadian Constitution health is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories.

In other words, the provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the development and delivery of health services to Canadians.

This means that provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the planning and management of their own health care systems.

As for the federal government, it is committed, through the Canada Health Act and the action plan on official languages, to promoting and protecting the health of all Canadians.

I remind everyone that we must never forget that the Government of Canada cannot get directly involved in a provincial or territorial jurisdiction. Nor should it infringe on provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Private Members' Business

The federal government cannot and must not act unilaterally in a shared provincial jurisdiction. Any decision to broaden the scope of the Canada Health Act requires extensive consultations with the provinces, and the agreement of all governments.

In Canada, there is a long-standing tradition of partnership and cooperation between the federal, provincial and territorial governments in the health sector.

We continue to work with the provinces and territories to ensure that Canadians have access to health services in both official languages. In fact, the action plan on official languages helps make health services in their own language more accessible for francophones and anglophones in minority communities.

The action plan's accountability framework is the concrete expression of our commitment to these linguistic communities, and it ensures that Health Canada will fulfill its responsibilities to improve access to health care services for official language minority communities.

In order to reaffirm the government's commitment, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, the following amendment:

[*English*]

That Bill C-202, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (linguistic duality) be not now read a second time but that the Order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Official Languages to report back to the House on or before October 31, 2003.

•(1805)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare the motion receivable. Resuming debate on the amendment.

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, discussions have taken place among all parties, as well as with the member for Ottawa—Vanier, concerning the taking of the division on Bill C-202 scheduled at the conclusion of private members' business later this day and I believe you would find consent that at the conclusion of today's debate on Bill C-202, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion for second reading of the said bill be deemed put, a recorded division requested and deferred to Thursday, March 20 at the end of government orders.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I want to understand clearly what is happening right now. If a recorded division were required, it would be held tomorrow, but if this evening the House were to decide to adopt the motion, on division, it would be fine? I want to make sure I understand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): At the conclusion of the hour set aside for debate, in accordance with the hon. parliamentary secretary's motion, and as agreed, the question shall be deemed to have been put and the division deferred to the end of the time provided for government orders, tomorrow evening.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a few very brief comments, in support of the bill introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. I want to congratulate him on this.

I had formally supported this bill. This legislation highlights the importance of respecting Canada's linguistic duality. This fundamental principle must be respected in all sectors of our society. Of course, one of the most important sectors is health care. Access to hospital services and health care is essential.

I know that the committee will consider how to implement this fundamental principle. I would simply like to say that I will be voting in favour of this bill. I know that my colleague, the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, already spoke on behalf of our caucus. He has fought his entire life to ensure that minority language rights in New Brunswick and elsewhere in Canada are respected.

I am very proud to share with the hon. members of this House the news that my hon. colleague will become a member of the Ordre de la Pléiade in a few weeks. I can also see my colleague, the hon. member for Repentigny, who is being awarded the same honour. So, on behalf of all my colleagues, we congratulate these members for their commitment to minority language rights in Canada.

•(1810)

[*English*]

I would like to make one final point on the general subject. I strongly support the principle of the bill and I am pleased it is going to committee. However I want to highlight one other issue and that is in the context of access to health services. I want to acknowledge and underscore the fact that there are huge demographic changes which are taking place in Canada.

I represent the community of Burnaby on the west coast of Canada and there is a major linguistic minority there who speak Cantonese and Mandarin and who still too often do not have access to hospital services. I want to take the opportunity of this debate not only to reaffirm our commitment to the fundamental principle of linguistic duality, anglais et français, but also to appeal to my colleagues in the government to recognize that it is essential that the federal government show leadership in places like Toronto, Vancouver and other centres and ensure that where there are significant linguistic minorities who speak languages such as Cantonese, Mandarin, or other languages in which they need access to health services, that they too will have access to those services.

[*Translation*]

I support this bill.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent that the motion by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health be agreed to, on division, this very evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent that the motion be agreed to, on division?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Pursuant to an order made earlier, the recorded division stands deferred until tomorrow night.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was on November 22 of last year that I rose in the House to put a question to my colleague from British Columbia, the Minister of the Environment, concerning the issue of threats to the health and environment from the Chevron oil refinery in North Burnaby, particularly after a major spill of MTBE. At that time I asked the Minister of the Environment what steps the federal government would be taking to ensure tough, enforceable standards for air emissions like sulphur dioxide and VOCs and for above-ground storage tanks at oil refineries in Canada.

I want to note that I have the opportunity of representing the community of Burnaby, and in particular in this case North Burnaby, which has been the home for several decades of a number of oil refineries, including the Chevron oil refinery. Over the years, the residents of North Burnaby frankly have had to put up with a fair amount of environmental contamination as a result of the presence of these refineries. Obviously there are also significant benefits from the refineries in terms of jobs and in other areas, but this comes at a cost.

Adjournment Debate

For example: in December 1999 there was an excess emission of sulphur dioxide; in March 2000 there was a spill of jet fuel that gave the community six days of noxious fumes; in April 2000 two tonnes of catalyst was spread over the neighbourhood; in May 2000 there was a spill of 80,000 litres of MTBE; and then every so often there are noxious odours arising from Chevron's daily emissions.

Once again I am calling on the federal government to show leadership in this area, to establish rigorous, enforceable national emissions standards under the Canada Environmental Protection Act for sulphur dioxide and volatile organic compound emissions from oil refineries, with the power to regulate point sources such as the North Burnaby Chevron oil refinery. As well, I am calling on the federal government to establish water quality discharge standards for MTBE and, finally, to establish enforceable national standards for above-ground storage tanks based on the equivalent CCME guidelines in this area.

It is incredible that today there are still no enforceable standards in place for above-ground storage tanks of petroleum on federal lands. There are guidelines in place, but still no standards whatsoever. It is essential that the federal government show the kind of leadership that should be in place to protect citizens of communities like Bathurst and Burnaby and other communities across Canada in this very important environmental area.

Here I want to pay tribute to the local community organization in Burnaby, BRACE, Burnaby Residents Against Chevron Expansion. It really has played a key role in highlighting concerns about health and environment. Its hard work and dedication led to a number of studies being undertaken: an environmental compliance study, a public safety risk assessment, a subsurface groundwater study and, finally, a health impact risk assessment.

All of these studies point to the tremendous importance of federal leadership. That is what I am calling for today in the House: federal leadership. Where is the federal Liberal government in standing up for the health and safety of Canadians in communities which do host oil refineries? We need tough, enforceable standards, not voluntary guidelines but tough, enforceable standards. I call on the government and its representative to make a commitment that it will bring forward these standards.

• (1815)

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Burnaby—Douglas for bringing the issue to the floor of the House and giving the government an opportunity to respond in a general context, and then work toward the specific incident that took place and the series of events that occurred from that point on.

The government is committed to ensuring cleaner air for Canadians and to working collaboratively with the provinces and territories to implement Canada wide standards for particulate matter and ozone.

Our commitment is demonstrated through the series of initiatives we have put in place that are delivering cleaner air for Canadians. Among those commitments are: low emission vehicles and cleaner fuels because we all recognize—industry, governments and consumers alike—that transportation is a key source of air pollutants that cause smog. Cleaner vehicles, engines and fuels are an

important step to reduce the threat to human health and the environment from air pollution.

Our regulatory initiatives would bring cleaner small engines and heavy off-road construction equipment. The vehicles, fuels and small engine initiatives would reduce smog pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, VOCs, that the member is concerned about, and particulate matter. But we recognize that VOCs also come from other products and sectors so we have started work on an action plan to reduce emissions of VOCs from paints, degreasing agents, solvents and other products.

We recognize that Canadian actions alone will not produce cleaner air in this country. We need emissions reductions in the United States from the industry and power sector and we are working to achieve those results. Particulate matter emissions would be reduced in both the United States and Canada thanks to agreements now in place. In addition, we are working to develop further projects with the United States that, as budget 2003 pointed out, would be especially important for southern Ontario and southern British Columbia. We recognize that Canadians need more information about air emissions and their sources in their communities.

For that reason, and for others in regard to the gasoline additive MTBE, in 2001 the federal government published a mandatory information gathering notice under CEPA 1999. The information gathered under the notice indicates that the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute member companies, including Chevron, no longer use MTBE in gasoline produced at their refineries.

With respect to the storage tanks, the Chevron Burnaby Refinery has voluntarily committed to Environment Canada to upgrade its storage tank systems to conform with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment codes of practice. As well, a framework for achieving emission reductions from refineries is currently being developed with the provinces.

Its goals are to protect human health, to align the environmental performance of Canadian refineries and comparable U.S. refineries while preserving the competitiveness of the sector in Canada.

The framework is expected to result in provincial and/or municipal jurisdictional regulatory action to achieve caps and establish a level playing field. Environment Canada officials are working with the CCME to release a new edition of the environment code of practice for storage tank systems containing petroleum products and allied petroleum products. Environment Canada is developing new regulations under part 9 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Finally, these new regulations are expected to be published in part I of the *Canada Gazette* in the fall of 2003.

• (1820)

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, with respect to my colleague, that answer will be a huge disappointment to the people of North Burnaby because what it demonstrates once again is that while there is an awful lot of words there is still no concrete action and no real federal leadership in this important area.

Adjournment Debate

The member talked about the provinces and municipalities providing regulations. I want to ask him a specific question with respect to the issue of above ground storage tanks.

He said that the Chevron refinery has voluntarily agreed to upgrade its storage tanks so that there would not be as much risk of spills, but the fact of the matter is there is no federal leadership and no mandatory rules in place. According to a document I have from Environment Canada, the voluntary approach has not achieved the desired environmental results and there are still leaks and spills from underground and above ground storage tank systems.

When will the government act to bring into force enforceable, mandatory and national standards for oil refinery storage tanks?

Mr. Alan Tonks: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's desire for specificity and I will be specific.

Development of the national framework for refinery emission reductions started in June 2002 and a draft framework document is expected in the fall of 2003 when a public consultation workshop will be held. The final draft of the framework document is scheduled for submission to the National Air Issues Co-ordinating Committee. Other air issues will be submitted in December 2003. The CCME approval will be sought in the spring of 2004. Further discussions on the adoption of the framework by different jurisdictions will continue into 2004.

If a specific chronology were to be required in terms of legislative framework that would govern refineries and storage tanks, that is the chronology to which we are dedicated.

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I put a question in this House to the Minister of Finance. The question was as follows:

The Finance Minister had no difficulty getting in touch with a bank president to try to save the Ottawa Senators.

Now the minister has decided to let the Senators help themselves by giving the team a \$60 million tax cut. Regrettably, this money is going to be taken out of the surplus in the employment insurance fund. It is unacceptable that millionaire hockey players are receiving this money.

The employment insurance fund has a surplus of \$43 billion. Will the Finance Minister pick up the phone, call the Minister of Human Resources Development, and get the eligibility criteria for the employment insurance program modified?

The Minister of National Revenue responded as follows:

Mr. Speaker, once again the member opposite has asked for information and it would be a Criminal Code offence if I answered.

It is a joke to hear the minister give that sort of answer to a question that is not criminal in the least. The reason I told the Minister of Finance to contact the Minister of Human Resources Development by phone is because it seems this is the method of communication used in her department.

The point I would like to raise again is the following: Does the Department of Human Resources Development not realize—or the Minister of Finance to whom I put the question—that there is room for improvement in terms of accessibility to employment insurance? This evening, we will hear a response from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

Let us look at the problem. Take for example people who make Christmas wreaths or people who work in fish plants, such as in southeastern New Brunswick. Officials launched an investigation because these people were banking hours. Now they are proposing that the government make changes to employment insurance.

Even the leader of the Liberal party in the New Brunswick legislature and the chair of the committee will be here in Ottawa tomorrow to meet with the minister to discuss necessary changes in the banking of hours. The Liberal leader and the representative from the Department of Human Resources Development Canada will be here.

We can also see the problem we have in the construction industry. We know that seasonal work is not a problem just in the southeastern part of my province; the situation is the same in Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and even in Ontario. Even in Toronto, and in Kapuskasing or Timmins I am sure, there are people working short weeks in construction, finishing up on Tuesdays.

Is there some way for the government to make changes to employment insurance, to make the necessary changes so that people will not be forced to cheat the system because they cannot live with so little, in terms of employment insurance benefits. Employment insurance is there as protection when they lose their jobs.

I find it regrettable that my question, which I asked of the Minister of Finance, was answered by the Minister of Revenue, who is afraid of going to jail. Meanwhile, the government is more dependent on employment insurance than the workers are.

I would like to have more clarification than I got from the minister with her concerns about going to jail. I would like an answer to my question.

● (1825)

[*English*]

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Acadie—Bathurst for his question, although I think it would be better directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development rather than the Minister of Finance.

The issue the member is now talking about has to do more with changes to EI and not about setting the rates, which is what I am familiar with, but more in terms of hours, et cetera. I would refer to his original question. He asked about the Minister of Finance picking up the phone to talk to the Minister of Human Resources Development. I am obviously not in a position to comment on that.

I can tell him with regard to the Ottawa Senators that the deal is off the table and in any event, the finance department would not be involved with any \$60 million tax cut funded from EI.

This gives me an opportunity to simply say that the EI account is an accounting device used as a record for financial transactions related to the EI program. As the member well knows, the annual premium revenue is paid into the government's consolidated revenue fund, the CRF and the annual program expenditure is paid out of the CRF, plus any interest credited to or charged against the account.

Adjournment Debate

The difference between the annual EI revenues and annual EI expenditures, including the administrative costs, results in the account recording an annual surplus or deficit in any year.

As the member knows, for the last 10 years straight the rates have been coming down. The minister has announced a process which has begun and will be concluded on June 30 that will deal with looking at a whole new approach and new regime in terms of the EI rates.

The annual surpluses or deficits recorded in the EI account have been consolidated. They were consolidated at the request of the Auditor General back in 1986 when the government acted on the Auditor General's advice. There is no separate EI account. There has not been since 1986. However, the cumulative balance recorded in the account is simply the sum of the annual surpluses minus the deficits and is entirely notional because the annual amounts in every year have been integrated into the consolidated revenue fund.

I conclude by saying to my hon. colleague that the specifics which he is looking for would be more suited for the HRDC department rather than finance. If he wants to talk about EI setting rates, et cetera, I would be more than happy to talk about that. The question he asked really was about picking up the phone and asking for changes. They are very legitimate concerns that the member has and I appreciate his concerns, but they do not fall within the purview of the Minister of Finance. They fall within the purview HRDC.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague opposite, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. I wanted to tell him that I had asked the Minister of Finance the following question:

The employment insurance fund has a surplus of \$43 billion. Will the Finance Minister pick up the phone, call the Minister of Human Resources Development, and get the eligibility criteria for the employment insurance program modified?

I asked the question to the Minister of Finance because we know that the government has balanced its budget on the backs of the workers who have lost their jobs. We also know that, year after year, the unemployment insurance fund has more than \$7 billion. The minister said that he had balanced his budget and there was a zero deficit.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development have the power to make changes to employment insurance, or does she need approval from the Minister of Finance?

If the Minister of Finance convinced the Prime Minister not to make changes to EI because he can balance his budget and attain a zero deficit, I think that it is fair to ask this question of him. It is, after all, the Minister of Finance who allocates the budgets.

My question was clear. It referred to one simple phone call by the Minister of Finance, saying that he was open to the idea of making changes to employment insurance. If these changes are presented, we, too, will support them.

[*English*]

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the minister is very open. In fact, we have started a consultative process with regard to EI setting. The minister has indicated he wants to see transparency on how those rates are set. He has asked for independent advice. He is clearly interested in dealing with this issue. This is a structural issue which in fact he has signalled. This is very important and something that I believe, particularly with the input of the member opposite and other members in the House, will be very helpful in terms of setting a new regime.

I again point out it is a benefit to both employers and employees that EI rates have continually come down over the last 10 years. Previous to that, they were going up. Now they are coming down. I know the member applauds us for that. The rate will now be set at \$1.98 and I know the member is very supportive of that.

I suggest if the member wants to make a phone call, he should actually phone the HRDC minister as far as the rates are concerned. If he wants to call us and give us support, we would appreciate that.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:34 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Paul Harris Fellowship Award		Mr. Chrétien	4411
Ms. Phinney	4407	Ms. Lalonde	4411
Cagnicourt, France		Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale)	4412
Mr. Bailey	4407	Ms. Lalonde	4412
Middle East		Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale)	4412
Ms. Beaumier	4407	Mr. Blaikie	4412
Farm Safety		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mrs. Ur	4407	Mr. Blaikie	4412
Diabetes Hope Foundation		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Malhi	4408	Mr. Clark	4412
Firearms Registry		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Breikreuz	4408	Mr. Clark	4412
Purim Holiday		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Cotler	4408	Mr. Clark	4412
Intellectual Disability		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Ms. Dalphond-Guiral	4408	Mr. Clark	4412
Americana		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mrs. Jennings	4409	Mr. Clark	4412
Organized Crime		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Grewal	4409	Mr. Clark	4412
La Semaine de la Francophonie		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Binet	4409	Mr. Clark	4412
Iraq		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mrs. Desjarlais	4409	Mr. Clark	4412
Jean-François Bisailon		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Bergeron	4410	Mr. Clark	4412
Human Rights		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Harb	4410	Mr. Clark	4412
Canada-U.S. Relations		Mr. Chrétien	4412
Mr. Borotsik	4410	Mr. Clark	4412
ORAL QUESTION PERIOD			
Iraq		Mr. Harper	4410
Mr. Harper	4410	Mr. Chrétien	4410
Mr. Chrétien	4410	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr. Chrétien	4411	Mr. Harper	4411
Mr. Harper	4411	Mr. Chrétien	4411
Mr.			

Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Casey	4415
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale)	4416
National Defence	
Mr. Ritz	4416
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	4416
Mr. Ritz	4416
Mr. Goodale	4416
Dairy Industry	
Mr. Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	4416
Mr. Pettigrew	4416
Mr. Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	4416
Mr. Pettigrew	4416
Goods and Services Tax	
Mr. Jaffer	4417
Ms. Caplan	4417
Mr. Jaffer	4417
Ms. Caplan	4417
Government Contracts	
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	4417
Ms. McLellan	4417
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	4417
Ms. McLellan	4417
St. Lawrence River	
Mr. Roy	4417
Mr. Thibault	4417
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Casey	4417
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale)	4418
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	4418
Ways and Means	
Notice of motion	
Mr. Bevilacqua (Vaughan—King—Aurora)	4418
Business of the House	
The Speaker	4418
Points of Order	
Ontario Budget Presentation	
Mr. Blaikie	4418
Mr. Boudria	4418
Mr. Adams	4418
Mr. Clark	4419
Oral Question Period	
Mrs. Wayne	4419

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Regan	4419
Export Development Canada	
Mr. Pettigrew	4420

THE ROYAL ASSENT

The Speaker	4420
-------------------	------

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House	
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Adams	4420
Industry, Science and Technology	
Mr. Lastewka	4420
Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act	
Mr. Bonwick	4420
Bill C-411. Introduction and first reading	4420
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4420
Organ Donation Act	
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	4420
Bill C-412. Introduction and first reading	4420
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4421
Criminal Code	
Mr. Cadman	4421
Bill C-413. Introduction and first reading	4421
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4421
Petitions	
Iraq	
Mr. Rocheleau	4421
Ms. McDonough	4421
Stem Cell Research	
Mr. Johnston	4421
Child Pornography	
Mr. Johnston	4421
Mr. Breitreuz	4421
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Regan	4422
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Regan	4424
(Return tabled)	4424
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Regan	4424
(Motion agreed to)	4424
Mr. Moore	4424
Transferred for debate	4424

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Transportation Amendment Act	
Bill C-26. Second reading	4425
Mr. Moore	4425
Mr. Roy	4428
Mr. Moore	4428
Mr. Mills (Red Deer)	4429
Ms. Sgro	4429
Mr. Moore	4430
Mr. Hilstrom	4431
Mr. Mills (Red Deer)	4431
Mr. Ménard	4432
Mr. Mills (Red Deer)	4434

Mr. Roy.....	4436
Mrs. Desjarlais	4437
Mrs. Wayne.....	4437
Mr. Hilstrom.....	4437
Mrs. Desjarlais	4438
Mr. Hilstrom.....	4440

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canada Health Act

Bill C-202. Second reading	4441
Mr. Bellemare	4441
Mr. Reid.....	4441
Ms. Gagnon (Québec).....	4443
Mr. Comartin.....	4444

Mr. Castonguay.....	4444
Amendment	4445
Mr. Tonks	4445
Mr. Robinson.....	4446
Division on amendment deferred	4446

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Environment

Mr. Robinson.....	4446
Mr. Tonks	4447

Taxation

Mr. Godin	4448
Mr. Wilfert	4448

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:

Publishing and Depository Services

PWGSC, Ottawa, ON K1A 0S5

Internet: <http://publications.gc.ca>

1-800-635-7943 or Local 613-941-5995

En cas de non-livraison,

retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :

Les Éditions et Services de dépôt

TPSGC, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Internet: <http://publications.gc.ca>

1-800-635-7943 ou appel local (613) 941-5995

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:

Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :

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

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Additional copies may be obtained from Publishing and Depository Services, PWGSC, Ottawa, ON K1A 0S5

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt, TPSGC, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

**On peut obtenir la version française de cette publication en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
TPSGC, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5**