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# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 6, 2005**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

## **CONTENTS**

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

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 6, 2005

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

### FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The House resumed from March 23, 2005, consideration of the motion.

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, we are going to debate Motion M-195 put forward by the hon. member for Brampton—Springdale. This motion concerns skills development, which is Quebec's responsibility.

The Bloc Québécois is denouncing the federal government's interference in an issue that is clearly within the purview of Quebec. There are currently loads of unprocessed immigration files. Out of the blue, the government found some money to include in this year's budget. I will quote the exact figures. On April 25, 2005, the government looked under the mattress and found \$75 million over five years to accelerate and expand the integration of internationally trained health care professionals.

Speaking of health, many people in my riding received degrees or diplomas abroad. Canada made them all sorts of promises. They were lured to Canada with the promise of a job. Once settled in this welcoming land, the reality hit them, hard.

The government, which is loaded with money, should give some to the provinces. Matters pertaining to diplomas and degrees and to immigration are the responsibility of the provinces and Quebec. The federal government is creating an extra level of administration to manage those who manage the managers. Clearly, that is more interference on the part of the federal government.

In addition, \$68 million over six years is earmarked to facilitate foreign credential assessment and recognition. Here again, the federal government is trying to interfere in and meddle with areas of provincial jurisdiction. The provinces have the necessary expertise to assess diplomas and degrees themselves.

We also have many immigrants in my riding of Compton—Stanstead. My office is located in a multicultural district with Serbs and Croats among its residents. In their home countries, these

individuals obtained diplomas and degrees which have never been recognized here. I know that professional associations in Quebec have the standards and expertise necessary to recognize foreign diplomas and degrees.

The hon. member for Brampton—Springdale has said she wants to have a national program. This is not easy, since the conditions are not the same in all the provinces. My daughter is a doctor of chiropractic. The hon. member should know as well as I do that when a chiropractor moves from one province to another, he or she has to get a new licence. Health professionals are not licensed nationally but provincially. I know what I am talking about. If my daughter wants to practise her profession outside Quebec, she has to get special permission from the other province. If this were a national program, it would be chaos once again, but the federal government seems to like that.

Besides, under the Constitution, professional corporations are under Quebec's jurisdiction. It is in the Constitution Act, 1867. This is nothing new. It is right in the Constitution. I have not been a member of Parliament for a very long time, but I have realized this government does not seem to abide by the Constitution, even if the Liberals themselves wrote it in 1867, at a time when there were only two political parties.

In case anyone does not know what I am talking about, section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867, grants exclusive jurisdiction over education to the legislatures of Quebec and other provinces. Education and degrees are under provincial jurisdiction. One day, the federal government will understand that.

We also have section 25 of the Canada-Quebec Accord on immigration. It was not signed in 1867, but in 1991, only 14 years ago. What it provides concerning the reception of immigrants is clear. For those who forget, I repeat that this is section 25 of the Canada-Quebec Accord, which says, and I quote, "Canada undertakes to withdraw from specialized economic integration services to be provided by Québec—"

• (1110)

I hope the translation was well done so that people are able to clearly understand what this means.

Our dear colleague from Brampton—Springdale should talk to the member for Vancouver Centre. I will quote what she said:

The recognition of foreign credentials is a provincial responsibility regulated by provincial legislation, and many of the regulatory bodies subject to this legislation are also under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government cannot interfere and say what it wants done in this regard.

*Private Members' Business*

I would add that this is a federalist talking.

I think that there should be a consensus. In fact, one MP says one thing and another MP says something else. Ideally, everyone should agree. That would be best.

Also, by simply having discussions on professional associations signifies that Ottawa does not have the constitutional jurisdiction to legislate this area. All this could compromise the discussions underway between Quebec and professional associations in Quebec.

I do not know if it works the same way in the other provinces but, in our case, we have professionals handling these diplomas. As a result, interference—yet again—by our good old federal government could slow down a process already begun.

In order to make it easier for newcomers to participate, this money should be transferred so they could learn French faster. These people are here, they want to work, share their professional skills, explore and be full-fledged citizens in their new land. However, they face a language barrier.

Last year, some people came to tell me about funding cuts to language training. The fiscal imbalance is to blame. If it were resolved, many other things could be too.

The federal government is interfering in a number of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. We are debating Motion M-195 on the recognition of foreign credentials, but manpower training is another area in which there is interference. The government also wants to keep the new Canada learning bond set out in Bill C-5.

Then, there is the child care system. The feds are in the midst of signing a pan-Canadian agreement on child care. Quebec has had such a system for over 10 years and has yet to sign anything. What a surprise.

Then there is regional development. Looking at the Summer Career Placement program, it is obvious that there is a movement of young people into the urban centres. One wonders why we still have regional development. As far as I am concerned, it is for urban regions. I also mentioned earlier the small amount of money that we were given for health, which falls strictly under the purview of the provinces. Infrastructure is another national farce. It is a responsibility of the municipalities and municipalities are managed by the Quebec government.

Moreover, they are busy enough without getting involved in the immigration sector. Immigration is very important in Quebec because it gives us a new vision and new knowledge. Quebec is already doing the work and doing it well. However, this takes time and negotiations. The federal government has just created another level of negotiation. In other words, it has just slowed the negotiations under way.

In closing, the Bloc Québécois will be voting against Motion M-195 because it basically deals with staff managing staff managing staff.

• (1115)

[*English*]

**Ms. Bev Oda (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to Motion No. 195 put forward by the member for

Brampton—Springdale. The motion is with regard to the recognition of foreign credentials. I want the House and the Speaker to know that the opposition party has been holding round tables on immigration matters.

As we all know, the immigration system in Canada requires a great deal of help and renewal. We have many challenges and many problems. It seems that we laud ourselves as a country that welcomes immigrants and yet we have so many hurdles for them to overcome once they come to this country and even to get into Canada.

However regarding the recognition of foreign credentials I would like to say that during these round tables, and as the chair for the Ontario group, we heard many stories of those who have come to this country expecting to be fully welcomed, to contribute to Canada, to ensure that Canada continues to be the country to which they choose to come, to contribute to its welfare and its well-being and add to the quality of life that they so much want for their families and for the next generation.

As far as the credentialing challenges are concerned, the first challenge is to have a program that welcomes immigrants to the country because of their professional background, their credentials and their experience. They are encouraged and worked with in their own countries to come to Canada. However once they come here, even with all these expectations, all the difficulties and the hard decisions they have had to make to leave their home countries, they find that those very criteria, the experience, their background and their credentials, are not in any way a stepping stone to being a full and contributing member to Canadian society.

Every member in the House can tell us about people in their home riding who have to come to Canada to be part of this country, who have full credentials, who have education levels to be lauded, who have years of experience and who were leaders in their homelands, and yet they come to Canada and find that they are not able to contribute in the same professions and nowhere close to the same levels as they were participating in their homelands.

I also want to explain that because we have no expectations and no obligations of our foreign representatives to ensure that people do not have unreasonable expectations, we should ensure that those who are servicing those in the other lands are equipped, knowledgeable and can ensure that they do not mislead those who are applying to come here.

Second, once they come to Canada, in order to exploit their credentials, further their professions and contribute in that way, they find that most employers require Canadian experience. The question here is how does one get that experience without having some support or some program in which to work with these people so that the Canadian experience can be had and they can demonstrate that they are fully qualified and have the experience, the background and the education to ensure they can contribute.

*Private Members' Business*

We also find that many of the stories we are told that people with not only one degree but with multiple degrees, post-bachelor degrees from foreign countries, in order to gain that experience and have their credentials recognized, are leaving this country. I heard a story of a very qualified health practitioner who left this country in order to get the experience from the United States which has more readily recognized her credentials of her homeland which was Romania.

• (1120)

She then had to make a difficult decision as to whether she would stay in the United States where it seemed she was more welcomed than in Canada which encouraged her and said that she would be welcomed. When she first arrived in Canada she found that things were made impossible for her. When she decided to come back to Canada after being in the United States and get work in her field, her previous experience in Canada was a challenge.

Even though these people make hard decisions, leave family at home and get fully qualified, we do not seem to have a system that makes sure that they can stay here, participate and contribute here.

We need to put into place a faster system for recognizing people's credentials, their educational backgrounds and their work experience in their homelands. There is no reason why we cannot set up a system that does not move these people to the back of the line. They should be recognized where they deserve to be recognized and to have a system in Canada that is consistent with our overall theme and pledge of being multicultural, that we do welcome immigrants and that Canada needs immigration and immigrants to contribute to and ensure we have a brighter future.

The motion actually was amended to call for to work with, to coordinate, collaborate and assist with this challenge but the outcome of it was only to report within six months. The opposition believes that we can move forward with this. We believe that because of the complexities of the system and the collaborations that will have to be made there should be a centralized effort. We would undertake to ensure that the challenges in this area were hastily and speedily corrected.

We do not believe that six months of further study to tell us we have challenges and problems would move us forward with any speed. As I said earlier, people are reconsidering coming to Canada and staying here. Consequently, we believe a centralized force is needed, not only to coordinate the 14 federal departments involved but also foreign credentialing, and to collaborate in partnership with the provinces as well as the trade and professional associations which play a large part in determining whether immigrants are going to be welcomed within their professions and consequently become a colleague in the workforce.

We believe that working with the provinces is important. However, because of the jurisdictional challenges, we do not believe the federal government should add another layer. However we should be able to work in partnership with the provinces to ensure that all parties that are involved and participate in this process are at one table.

The coordination between 14 federal departments will be a force that needs to have a centralized focus. We cannot have each department establishing its own criteria or standards. The criteria

standard should vary according to professions, not according to departments if there is to be some good thinking and coordination behind it. However we believe that a centralized approach will be more effective.

We believe that Canada is a multicultural country. We have for generations built this country on immigration. We have seen where those immigrants have built the country and contributed to the quality of life that we all enjoy. In the area of foreign credentialing, we are missing such great opportunities. We are missing the ability of these immigrants to contribute. We believe the motion is flawed and we would oppose it.

• (1125)

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the debate today on Motion No. 195 which was introduced by the member for Brampton—Springdale. The motion reads:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should create a secretariat responsible for overseeing the foreign credential recognition program, which would work with all stakeholders and provincial representatives to coordinate and collaborate on activities, implement processes and assist in the research and development of national standards that recognize foreign training credentials in Canada.

We had one round of debate on this on March 10 and I am happy to be part of this second hour of discussion. I believe the motion does contribute toward resolving the whole question of the recognition of international credentials. We know it is a serious issue in Canada. Many newcomers to Canada face incredible difficulties getting work in the fields in which they were trained and with their educational backgrounds. We know the frustration and anxiety that causes them and what a terrible brain waste that is.

The motion would clarify where responsibility for international credentials lies within the government. With 10, 12 or 14 federal departments having an interest in the whole issue of international credentials there is an important coordination task to be done within the federal government.

The Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has some responsibility in this issue. In the Prime Minister's first cabinet the parliamentary secretary was given explicit responsibility for foreign credentials. When we looked down the list of parliamentary secretaries we could see there was one who had explicit responsibility for that issue.

The second time around that explicit designation disappeared and was replaced by a letter of mandate that I understand the parliamentary secretary requested from the Prime Minister. It is not as obvious now where the responsibility lies. I know the parliamentary secretary is working on that file but it was a bit concerning to see that explicit responsibility disappear even in the listing of parliamentary secretaries.

*Private Members' Business*

We need to have clear lines of accountability and establishing a secretariat would assist in making it clear who in government is working on this issue and that it is not coming off the corner of various people's desks or is not the responsibility of some ad hoc interdepartmental committee. We need to be very explicit about this responsibility given the importance of this to so many people in Canada, given the importance of resolving the whole question of international credentials and given the importance of it to our immigration system.

I am not supporting the motion because I believe in bigger government. I am supporting it because I believe our structure of government needs to show the clear lines of accountability. It needs to show exactly where the work is getting done and who is responsible for it, which is why I like Motion No. 195 as it was introduced.

I am a little concerned about the member's intent with Motion No. 195. It seems to me that in the first hour of debate the commitment came into question when the member allowed an amendment that would gut her motion. She agreed to an amendment that, instead of establishing a secretariat with very clear lines of responsibility, would direct ministers responsible for overseeing the foreign credential recognition program to work expeditiously with all stakeholders and provincial and territorial governments. That is a huge change in the intent of the motion. I must say that I was glad when the House voted it down overwhelmingly on March 23.

I believe the amendment, which was proposed by members of the Liberal Party, gutted the intent of the member's original motion. It removed the secretariat and merely called on ministers to work together to solve this problem. We went from tangible, concrete action to something that was very fuzzy indeed.

A serious question was raised by the actual amendment. I think the amendment belied a lack of confidence in the government ministers working on this issue. Why would a government member propose an amendment calling on government ministers to work together on an important issue? Why not do something more tangible? I was concerned about the intent of the amendment and was glad when it went down to defeat. I think the unamended motion goes some way to doing something concrete in this important area.

• (1130)

We know that the whole area of international credentials is a huge problem here in Canada. We have a 60-40 split. Every year 60% of our new immigrants to Canada are skilled workers in the economic class. They are generally the ones who have the difficulties having their international credentials recognized. The other 40% of our immigrants are in the family class or refugee class and that is of the 225,000 to 240,000 immigrants who arrive in Canada each year. To have a significant number of skilled workers coming to Canada and not being able to work in their field calls into question our whole immigration program and the whole skilled worker category.

As has been said before, we do seem to be losing out to Australia and the United States in this regard. Australia has a centralized system run by its federal government to help people work toward the recognition of their credentials and find positions where they can work in their chosen fields even before they arrive in Australia. It is

certainly a system that inspires much more confidence in potential immigrants to Australia.

We need to ensure that Canada's system invokes that kind of confidence. Right now, I am afraid that it is not doing that. We could easily lose out on potential immigrants to Australia and the United States in this regard.

Our system awards people points toward being able to immigrate to Canada for their education, professional skills, and work experience, but then does not allow that to pan out into actual work when they arrive here in Canada. That is a huge problem with our immigration system. We need to ensure that the point system corresponds with the ability to work once a person arrives in Canada.

This situation causes unhappiness, frustration, anxiety, and now we are hearing from immigrant and refugee serving agencies about the anger among newcomers to Canada. It is totally uncalled for. It is a terrible waste, a brain waste. Not only is this a frustration to our newcomers to Canada, it is a huge cost to the Canadian economy. Some studies show that this situation causes a loss to the Canadian economy of \$3 billion to \$5 billion. We cannot stand by while both that human and economic waste happens here in Canada.

The government so far is talking about some minimal things to help work toward this. It is talking about a web portal to give people better information. That is a good idea, but it is a very limited one. Unfortunately, it is often touted like one of the few things that the federal government is tangibly doing on this issue. Not everybody who is immigrating to Canada has Internet in order to access the web portals. Without a direct person-to-person encounter about the possibilities in Canada for someone, one cannot always get the best information off an Internet page.

The parliamentary secretary keeps talking about building relationships on this file, building relationships with professional organizations and with the provinces. That is all well and good. I have told the parliamentary secretary that building relationships is a good thing, but there comes a time when we actually have to consummate some of those relationships and ensure that the system is working. It is not clear to me that we have reached that stage yet.

We have had this promise to deal with this issue in three throne speeches, but there are still doctors driving cabs, university professors working at convenience stores, and nurses working as hotel housekeepers. That is just not good enough. We need to see some action where these people are actually working in the fields where they were trained. We know that they would be happier here in Canada and that the frustration level would go down.

This is not the only problem with our immigration system. Yesterday a cross-Canada group called Sponsor Your Parents had demonstrations. They were calling on the government to address the whole delay of parental and grandparental applications.

We know that often people who immigrate to Canada under a family class sponsorship do better. They are happier, they settle into Canada more quickly because they have the support of family members. However, the fact that they are not able to sponsor their parents and grandparents later is a huge factor of frustration for them. One that calls into question the whole commitment about the reunification of families that is supposed to be a key cornerstone of our immigration policy. So, that is sort of the flip side of this foreign credential issue.

When I was speaking at the demonstration in Vancouver yesterday, we could not get through that whole demonstration without the issue of foreign credentials also coming up because it is such a major frustration for immigrants to Canada.

• (1135)

We need to deal with both these problems. We need to restore confidence in our immigration system. If people get points for their professional education, they should be able to work in Canada. We need to ensure that the commitments of family reunification are borne out by the ability of new immigrants to sponsor their parents and grandparents.

We need to ensure that those promises we make to newcomers when they are choosing to come to Canada are kept once they get to Canada. Our immigration system, on which we depend for our economy and for building this nation, must remain in good repute around the world as well as here in Canada. Those are the reasons why I will be supporting Motion No.195.

**Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No.195. I would like to make it clear that the motion we are dealing with and presumably the vote we will be facing is a vote about the secretariat. It is not about the amendments or these other things that are around.

I have the highest regard for the member who introduced the motion, the member for Brampton—Springdale. She cares about effective integration of internationally trained new Canadians into our labour market. I want to give this issue more visibility by calling for the creation of a foreign credential recognition secretariat, as she does.

Before continuing, we should ask ourselves what foreign credential recognition is all about and why it has become so important. Early in the 20th century, people wanting to settle on the plains of western Canada would only have to show their hands to the immigration officer in Warsaw or Glasgow. If those hands were rough and gnarled, those people were deemed fit to settle in one of North America's last frontiers. Indeed, they were very welcome.

Today, in the 21st century, knowledge, not rough hands, has become the currency of the new economy. Where once evidence of hard physical labour earned a person a pass to a steady job or a farm operation, nowadays knowledge is a little bit more difficult to measure.

A certificate or degree earned in a school in India, Hungary or Argentina may not be readily understood as equivalent to a Canadian

### *Private Members' Business*

certificate or degree. That is why fully educated and qualified immigrants to Canada are taking longer and longer to fully enter the labour market and to earn an appropriate salary commensurate with their knowledge and skills. That is why internationally trained Canadians may find it hard to find employment here in Canada.

In a global economy, Canada can ill afford to shut out valuable human resources. Research tells us that within 10 years, virtually all our net labour force growth will come from immigration. Increasingly, Canada has to compete globally in order to attract qualified and educated immigrants.

Right now, our standard of living does attract immigrants, but if they are not allowed to fully contribute, talented workers will be discouraged from coming, and how will this help our standard of living?

Canada has no time to lose. How then can we expedite the recognition of foreign credentials? I would suggest we need to marshal our best resources in meeting this challenge. That is why on April 25, the Government of Canada rose to the challenge and announced the launch of the internationally trained workers initiative. It delivers on a Speech from the Throne commitment to improve the integration of immigrants and internationally trained Canadians into the workforce.

There are two aspects that I would like the House to consider. First, the internationally trained workers initiative will include from human resources and skills development \$68 million in the foreign credential recognition program as well as other aspects, such as enhanced language training and better labour market information for prospective immigrants through a "Going to Canada" immigration portal, which has already been mentioned this morning.

Second, the internationally trained workers initiative is a government-wide initiative, including citizenship and immigration, health, and a total of 15 federal departments and agencies. In fact, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has taken a central role in this initiative.

It is not surprising that one of the principal departments in the federal government dealing with foreign credential recognition and skills recognition is HRSD, which is mandated to deal with labour market challenges as they arise.

Today the challenge is one that looms just around the corner. Employers may soon face shortages in some skilled occupations and trades in some areas of Canada as a result of baby boomers retiring. Compound this with the ever rising skills requirements. How can we then build a quality workforce to take on the whole world?

*Private Members' Business*

•(1140)

Clearly, it means attracting skilled workers to Canada, which we already do very well. Our problem is not attracting skilled immigrants, rather it is fully using their attributes once they arrive, as the member for Brampton—Springdale well knows. Research tells us that those countries that practise an inclusive labour market enjoy higher productivity and a higher standard of living.

What is foreign credential recognition? In short, it is the process whereby education and job experience gained elsewhere can be verified to determine if they are equal to Canadian standards. The foreign credential recognition program is all about working with the provinces and territories, regulators, sector councils, employers and others to establish credential assessment processes that are fair, accessible, consistent, transparent and rigorous to the internationally trained while still meeting the Canadian standards that the public expects.

Partnerships are essential with the provinces and the territories, and key authorities representing regulated and non-regulated occupations. We live and work in a complex labour market. No one department or agency can possibly do it all. For such a process to work it depends on buy-in from the private sector and other levels of government.

Progress is well underway through the foreign credential recognition program and on a variety of fronts under the internationally trained workers initiative. Through this initiative the Government of Canada is providing \$75 million over the next five years to improve the integration of internationally educated doctors, nurses and other health care professionals into the Canadian system.

We know we have a web portal, but I am very pleased to see there is a development of a self-assessment instrument in the health care field which will be of great value to perspective immigrants.

Through the foreign credential recognition program other health care professions are also benefiting such as pharmacists, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers will receive funding from HRSD to conduct research and develop a database of foreign institutions offering degrees in engineering. The foreign credential program is also taking steps to help the non-regulated occupations which make up almost 85% of the occupations in Canada.

The Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council, for example, is developing new procedures to help integrate experienced foreign workers facing Canadian industry credentials. The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council is also conducting research for its sector on this subject.

Last but not least, HRSD is also spearheading the development of the workplace skills strategy in tandem with workers, employers, sector councils, labour, and the provinces and territories. In the last budget the government invested \$125 million under the strategy over the next three years that will enable us to create the best and most skilled workforce in the world.

We will do this in partnership with the stakeholders to help strengthen our learning system including apprenticeship, boosting

literacy and other essential skills, and facilitate the recognition of the credentials and work experience of internationally trained workers. In particular, with some immigrants, it is important to help raise their literacy and essential skills so they can fully join in creating a more prosperous Canada.

I am pleased that the sector councils are joining with us in advancing the yardsticks, which I prefer to call metre sticks, in this area. A recent Statistics Canada study tells us that even a small increase in the country's literacy score can translate into a relative rise in labour productivity and in GDP per capita.

In conclusion, I call on the House to vote for Motion No. 195 as it supports the work that has already been done in HRSD with the provinces and territories, key partners and stakeholders, and it will help focus more effectively that work. We have shown that skills are important and that collaboration across governments and with the private sector is key to continuing progress. I congratulate the member for bringing the motion forward.

•(1145)

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this issue is of tremendous importance to many Canadians across the country, not only new immigrants but also to Canadians born and raised here.

It is important to young Canadians who have taken the opportunity to go away and educate themselves, perhaps to become medical doctors. They have faced substantial difficulties when they have returned to Canada in having their qualifications recognized and being integrated into the labour market workforce.

My motion to create a secretariat would ensure that we work in collaboration with the provinces and the multitude of different stakeholders along with the multitude of different departments and regulatory bodies within government to ensure that the credentials of Canadians are recognized, that they are accredited and that they can be integrated into the labour market workforce.

I request the support of all members for my motion. As a government, we have taken significant steps to address this issue by providing a substantial amount of money such as \$75 million for health care workers to be recognized, accredited and integrated into the workforce. We also have provided \$68 million for our internationally trained workers initiative. Aside from myself, other members have also done substantial work in this area.

It would be historic to create this secretariat. It would benefit not only Canadians but our nation as a whole in its economic growth and prosperity. I urge all members to support this very historic initiative.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 8 immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, discussions have taken place with all parties and I believe that you would find unanimous consent to hold the division tomorrow, Tuesday, June 7, after government orders, instead of Wednesday, as you just announced.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** The House will now suspend until 12:05 p.m.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:50 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:03 p.m.)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[*English*]

### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACT

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, an act to establish the Department of Social Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts, be read the third time and passed.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our country has many resources but none is more precious than our children. They represent the hopes and the dreams of families, communities and the entire nation. They are the future that will only be realized when Canadians elect a government that cares about supporting our most vulnerable members of society.

If anything represents the callous disregard for children and families of the government, it has to be its record when it comes to child poverty. I have listened very intently to the speeches from the government's side regarding the legislation we have before us today, Bill C-22.

While Canadians might hear all the usual statements from a party that is campaigning for re-election, let us look at the actual record of the Prime Minister when it comes to children.

Poverty among children in Canada is rising. The government says that billions are being spent. When questioned directly about the plight of children, the same inability to provide a public accounting for how dollars are actually being spent, which created the sponsorship fraud, applies to the funds that the government says are earmarked for children. The money really ends up being siphoned off for other Liberal priorities.

As finance minister, the Prime Minister oversaw a deal in 1997 that resulted in a clawback of the national child benefit supplement from the pockets of some of our neediest children. This new program in 1997 to assist Canadian families with children replaced what many Canadians called the baby bonus. It was introduced as the Canada child tax benefit, the CCTB. It included a basic benefit and a supplement, the national child benefit supplement, the NCBS.

The NCBS program was supposed to be designed to reduce poverty among low income families with children. Negotiations between federal and provincial governments around the implementation of the NCBS resulted in most provinces, Ontario included, deducting the NCBS amount from the benefits received by families on social assistance. This is what is commonly known as the NCBS clawback. This offset was a design feature of the NCBS, although provinces were not compelled to do it. Most provinces do offset but in different ways. Only Manitoba and New Brunswick do not offset in any way.

Considering the fact that the money was being doled out by Ottawa, and we know that money is power, why would Ottawa agree to allow money, which it publicly bragged was meant for our poorest children, to go somewhere else? The Prime Minister agreed to this because it created the fiscal imbalance. Of the approximately \$250 million a year that the Ontario government claws back, 80% is directed to the fiscal imbalance in that province with the remaining 20% going to municipalities for programs that the gas tax, which has been spent and re-spent, promised and re-promised, should be funding instead.

The Liberal Party was prepared to see the money intended for our children be misdirected because in Ottawa the Prime Minister could stand in front of cameras and say, "Look what Ottawa is spending on our children". In fact the Prime Minister knew that once the dollars went to the provinces, they had to cope with the federal cutbacks in the shared delivery program.

In Ontario the average monthly number of children affected by the clawback in 2003-04 was about 164,000. One of the ironies of this has to be the clawback from needy children in the greater Toronto area, the GTA. That municipality then directs some of the clawed back funds into food banks. It has been suggested by the Income Security Advocacy Centre that 13,500 children in the GTA would no longer need to use a food bank if the national child benefit supplement was restored to families on social assistance.

*Government Orders*

•(1205)

By the end of 2003, municipalities were sitting on a pool of \$20 million in unspent national child benefit funds. Municipalities reported spending over \$800,000 on reinvestment program administration costs in 2003. The money has been going to administration costs instead of to the children, money that has been clawed back from the pockets of some of our neediest children, those on social assistance.

I mention these figures in the program because I hear spending figures tossed around by the government. The minister of the new department, which Bill C-22 would legitimize, seems perplexed that the government is spending all this money, yet child poverty continues to rise in Canada. This government cannot understand why. Perhaps if the government were not so consumed with scandal, it would take the time to look at some of these programs to see if they work.

The municipalities are getting wise to the fiscal imbalance practised by the federal government when it comes to our children. In my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, the council of the township of South Algonquin passed a resolution requesting restoration of the national child benefit to Ontario Works recipients.

Similar motions have been passed by councils in Mattawa, Papineau, Cameron, Hamilton, Kapuskasing, Kingston, Windsor, Ottawa and Sudbury, to name only a few municipalities.

This past weekend we heard a lot of rhetoric from the Prime Minister about a new deal for cities. Obviously he did not take the time to consult the mayors of those municipalities I just mentioned when he set up the clawback of the benefit to children.

Canadians have learned to be skeptical of a minority PM who promises anything to cling to power. I challenge the NDP finance minister to rewrite the \$4.6 billion deal. Unlike other spending promises, eliminating the clawback will not cost taxpayers any more than what was promised in 1997 when the program was announced.

Ontario families who receive social assistance have an average of \$115 taken away each month per child as a result of the clawback.

Most do not benefit in the reinvestment programs where some of this clawback money is supposed to be directed, which are generally not designed with them in mind. In Ontario, 80% of the money clawed back goes toward child care supplements for working families for which social assistance recipients generally do not qualify.

I know that \$115 is not a lot of money to a government that is used to paying a million dollar commission for non-existent work. However, \$115 is a lot of money for someone living below the poverty line. The sum of \$115 per month represents a lot of money when a person is trying to adequately provide food, clothing and shelter for your children. Canadians have to ask, why is Parliament even debating the creation of this new department and the legislation we have before us today?

In another example of the democratic deficit that created the corruption associated with the sponsorship scandal, Parliament is being asked to retroactively approve a department that already exists. Now some Canadians have recognized that in order to entice

particular types of people to be a member of the Liberal Party, certain inducements have to be offered.

With the former member for York Centre safely seated with his rich patronage reward in the other place, the current member for York Centre could run in a safe Liberal seat for, as they say in the hockey business, "future considerations".

Future considerations, so it turned out, was creating a new job for the Minister of Social Development. Parliament is now being asked to retroactively approve the deal. That sure sounds familiar to me. I look forward to hearing from my colleague from Vancouver South, the health minister, and his recollections of the negotiation process.

As an old hockey player, the Minister of Social Development has some experience with trades and backroom deals. As the new goalie for children, a role I encourage the minister to assume, the time has come to make children a priority and block the shots from the PM.

The Prime Minister, as the previous finance minister, scored one goal, with an assist from Liberal MPs, that needs to be disallowed and this involves children. The Minister of Social Development should stand up to the Prime Minister and undo the deal that was made in 1997 and make national child benefit funding conditional on provinces and territories not clawing back the benefit from families receiving social assistance.

•(1210)

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this important debate. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Beaches—East York.

There are many convincing arguments for the creation of Social Development Canada, which is what the legislation before us today makes possible. Surely none is more compelling than the new department's increased capacity to address the needs of caregivers, society's unsung heroes, who give so generously of themselves and their time to care for aged relatives or relatives with disabilities. Here I would like to mention Caregivers Nova Scotia from my own province, one of the most impressive caregiving organizations in Canada and a leading proponent of volunteer caregiving.

A key reason for creating SDC, Social Development Canada, is to provide a centre of expertise on social policy and programs so that Canada can maintain and surpass its international reputation as a caring society.

*Government Orders*

Nothing better reflects that commitment than the decision to appoint a Minister of State for Families and Caregivers, dedicated to identifying and implementing measures to better support these Canadians. The minister of state's new role signals the importance the Government of Canada attaches to family issues and recognizes the valuable role caregivers play in our society. The minister's sensitivity and his understanding of caregivers makes him well suited to this role.

Most unpaid caregivers are middle-aged and employed full time while caring for elderly relatives and persons with disabilities. Despite the challenges of juggling work and family life, on average these Canadians provide 23 hours of unpaid caregiving per month.

Like millions of Canadians, I have been a caregiver myself, in my case to my parents, who were dying of cancer but who were able to die at home where they lived, where they raised their family, where they were comfortable and where they were loved.

Our country would be very different and much poorer if it were not for the selfless efforts of so many Canadians who care for their loved ones, and as impressive as the numbers are, they are merely a harbinger of things to come. Today's baby boomers are fast becoming seniors. Because seniors now tend to live longer and because families are becoming smaller and more dispersed, the growing demand for caregiving has grown stronger, yet the capacity for caregiving is diminishing.

The role of the caregiver is already proving to be very difficult for many families. We understand the challenges these Canadians may face in balancing their professional life, their personal health needs, and family and caregiving responsibilities. We also know that many Canadians are faced with the dual role of raising their children while providing care to an aging parent, hence the so-called sandwich generation. In 2002, 27% of people aged 45 to 64 with children at home also cared for seniors.

I have met a large number of caregivers of varying circumstances. Each has a very compelling story. At this year's Caregivers Nova Scotia annual dinner, which the minister attended, we heard of a family, for example, whose father was diagnosed with cancer and shortly after that whose child was diagnosed as autistic. These stories are becoming far too common.

Not surprisingly, Canadians have told us that providing support to family caregivers must be a priority of the Government of Canada. There is no question that it is.

Our government currently provides a range of initiatives to assist family caregivers, including: tax credits for caregivers, infirm dependants and medical expenses, the last of which was recently enriched; transfers to support provincial and territorial programs, which include child care, respite care, and home care; the employment insurance compassionate care benefit, which offers up to six weeks of income replacement to family members who must leave work temporarily to care for a dying family member; the Canada pension plan general dropout provision, which exempts up to 15% of years of little or no earnings from a person's pension calculation and could be used to cover years spent in caregiving; labour legislation supporting flexibility in federally regulated workplaces; first nations health programming such as home,

community care and adult care programs; and the veterans' independence program and respite care.

As proud as we are of these programs and services, there is a lot more to be done. That is exactly what Social Development Canada has been designed to do and intends to do.

● (1215)

The 2004 Speech from the Throne committed the department to consult with Canadians to find ways to improve support for unpaid caregivers. Key to this process will be working with provinces and territories and engaging parliamentarians, stakeholder groups and Canadian individuals in developing a comprehensive strategy to better meet the needs of caregivers.

Considerable progress has been made. At the November 2004 meeting, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for social development discussed working together on a comprehensive strategy.

Both the Minister of Social Development and the Minister of State for Families and Caregivers have made it a personal priority to advance this agenda. For instance, the minister of state is currently in extensive discussions with the real experts on these challenges: Canadian caregivers themselves. He is crossing the country to consult with unpaid caregivers with first-hand experience, as well as experts and stakeholders involved in this field.

Since launching a series of round tables in January, the minister of state has heard how caregiving responsibilities often affect the caregivers' employment opportunities and income, their out of pocket expenses and their social, emotional and physical well-being. I was pleased to join the minister on the Atlantic leg of his round tables in my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

In response to what he has heard, the minister of state has pledged to make sure that SDC develops citizen-focused policies and programs that better meet the needs of unpaid caregivers and those they care for: seniors, people with disabilities, and children, among the most vulnerable in our society.

That is the real strength of Social Development Canada. SDC was created to find more effective ways to meet the changing circumstances and expectations of families, children, Canadians with disabilities, seniors and caregivers.

By narrowing the department's focus to these key areas of social development, we can concentrate on issues that fall outside the labour market, issues that sometimes tend to be overlooked when the focus is primarily on the economy. Because of the division of responsibilities between Social Development Canada and HRSD Canada, we can better identify solutions to existing and emerging social problems, such as the pressures and stress that are faced by family caregivers, and engage a broad range of partners to support community development.

*Government Orders*

In creating Social Development Canada, Bill C-22 provides a focal point for social policy within the Government of Canada, enabling the department to become the real voice of social development. SDC's new structure helps us take a holistic approach to policy and program development. It creates new avenues for working with other federal departments, other levels of government, the private sector, the key voluntary sector and individual Canadians, and for improving the lives of children and families, seniors, and people with disabilities, as well as their caregivers.

The powers and authorities contained in this act will allow us to coordinate and develop better integrated strategies such as the one we are developing for Canada's caregivers, which will strengthen our country's social foundations and produce better results for Canadians. The example of caregiving underscores just how critical this work is to our nation. I call on my colleagues' support to carry on this vital activity by assuring this legislation passes quickly.

• (1220)

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for the interesting and well thought out presentation. I do have a question for him. As we move ahead, this is a very important and challenging issue for people in public policy, at both the federal and the provincial level, and it is very much related to the whole aspect of home care. It is very much a money issue.

In one instance, I dealt with a constituent and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The constituent wanted to access the VIP program, which is very much related to the caregiver, and was told by the government that the person was not eligible for that particular program but was eligible for nursing home care, so that instead of costing \$2,500 it would cost \$48,000, which was against the wishes of the family.

What is the member's opinion on the best method of delivering a good caregiver program as we go forward? Would it be the tax credit system, which is on the table now, or is it more likely to be a program that pays the direct out of pocket expenses to the caregiver, or is it a program that pays the caregiver a certain amount in addition to the out of pocket expenses? This is an item that really has not been fleshed out. I would like to hear the member's views on that point.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague's question both illustrates and emphasizes just how different the varying needs of our country's caregivers are.

He mentioned home care. One of our problems is that we have very different levels of home care depending on where we live in Canada. In my own province of Nova Scotia, for example, our home care program is not very robust. There is virtually no pediatric home care.

I recall a former colleague of mine, who had two autistic sons. I believe that at the time they were 12 and 14 years of age. Because she and her husband were working every hour they could, keeping in mind that one of them always had to be with the boys, every other hour was spent putting money into their care, not only in the present but more particularly for when the parents might not be there to take care of the boys. They got a letter from the Home Care Nova Scotia

program indicating that their respite of two hours a week was being cut off because their income had gone up and was too high.

We need to recognize that these people who face these burdens—and also what was for them the joy of having these two boys at home—have a real financial burden. We have to tailor this to their needs.

In my own case when I had parents dying at home, I was one of seven children. My two sisters from Toronto moved into the family home in Nova Scotia and provided full time care to my parents. They were heroes to the rest of us. We all played a part. There were seven of us. We were not rich, but we were able to provide the care and we wanted to provide the care. My parents were sick for a short period of time and were less than six months in palliative care before they died.

Our circumstances, while sad, were not desperate at all. In fact, in many ways it was a learning experience for us, and our parents died reasonably comfortably at home. Our circumstances cannot be compared to those of somebody who has virtually no income or an employer who provides no support, or to those of somebody who cannot provide the nursing care at night.

That is why I think it is very important to have these discussions, as the minister of state is doing in going across the country and talking to caregivers in their communities and asking them what they need. In some cases, it might be a tax credit. In other cases, it might be more robust home care. In another case, it could be directly paying for benefits for veterans, children or people with special needs.

I think the key is that caregivers are individualized. There is no broad need across the country. There are just a lot of very individual needs. I am glad that the minister is going across Canada talking to these people individually so that we can provide some kind of suite of services for these people who take such a burden off the system, put it onto themselves and provide better care for their loved ones.

• (1225)

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister created the new Department of Social Development, he affirmed the Government of Canada's commitment to support Canadians at every stage of their lives.

A growing number of Canadians are entering, or are already in, the so-called golden age, reaping the rewards of a life of hard work to build a country we so proudly share today.

We only need to look around this chamber to realize how great the impact of our aging population is in our nation. Many of us, like many Canadians, are baby boomers, soon to join the swelling ranks of seniors who are transforming our country in myriad ways. The repercussions of this trend will require innovative responses from all levels of government to meet seniors' needs and take advantage of their skills and experience to better our society.

*Government Orders*

Our government's decision to create Social Development Canada signalled our understanding that we have to take a fresh approach to social policy development in the 21st century to reflect the changing face of our people and society.

Canada today is a dramatically different country than the one many of us grew up in. Just a generation or two ago, seniors represented a small proportion of the population, but many were among the poorest people in the country. Years ago we set out to rectify that situation by introducing public pensions and old age security for our most vulnerable citizens.

Here are the most significant statistics: In 2003 there were 4.6 million Canadians 65 years or older. Those numbers are expected to climb to 6.7 million by 2021. That is double what the seniors population was as recently as 2000. Even more striking, there will be 9.2 million seniors in 2041, nearly one in four Canadians.

The reverberations of these trends are being felt in all quarters, from the health system to public and private pension plans, to the voluntary sector. We need a better understanding of how we can best meet the needs and expectations of this growing segment of our population.

Canadians want the assurance they can live their later years in comfort and dignity. We firmly believe that Canada's seniors have earned that right and deserve to be treated with the utmost compassion and respect.

I personally was very involved in the work of the government's women's caucus. I was chair of the subcommittee that pushed for a task force on seniors, that worked very hard and got a commitment to increase the guaranteed income supplement. I organized a full day consultation in the greater Toronto area for all of the organizations and individuals who wanted to make presentations on what programs and assistance for seniors would look like in the future. I was very proud to be involved because the government in this last budget has put forward a plan, and we need to now look forward to a much longer plan.

The 17 recommendations that were made by the task force were driven by two imperatives: first, moving forward now to address the needs of today's vulnerable seniors; and second, taking the steps needed to prepare for the growing number of seniors as our population ages.

Following a key recommendation in the task force report, the budget announced that the guaranteed income supplement will be increased, as I mentioned before. These benefits will rise by 7%, representing the biggest income hike in a generation for seniors who need it most. This is the first increase to the GIS since 1984, other than inflation indexing, and totals \$2.7 billion over the next five years. Perhaps most important, this much needed increase will be there for this and future generations of low income seniors, to help those most in need to make ends meet.

These additional funds will be phased in over two years, starting in January 2006. By 2007 the increase will add up to \$432 a year for a single senior and \$700 a year for couples. These are amounts that will make a real difference in their lives and will also make up to 50,000 more seniors eligible for partial guaranteed income supplement benefits.

We must recognize that this is only the beginning. Our ability to move forward depends on how well we work together. Many federal departments and all levels of government have important pieces of the seniors puzzle. What we need to do is focus on aligning these efforts to achieve our collective goal of ensuring that seniors enjoy the quality of life they deserve.

● (1230)

That is why budget 2005 announced the creation of a national seniors secretariat within the Department of Social Development. The secretariat will work with partners in and out of government to find ways to meet the needs of current and future generations of seniors. It will also look for opportunities to mobilize the energies and efforts of seniors who have already spent a lifetime contributing to Canadian society.

Budget 2005 also announced an increase in funding for the successful new horizons for seniors program. New horizons for seniors was launched in October 2004 with an investment of \$8 million with ongoing funding of \$10 million annually.

The program encourages seniors active living and social participation, enabling older Canadians to continue contributing to their communities. It has proven to be very popular, generating over 1,400 applications since its inception.

In response to an overwhelming interest in the program, the Government of Canada announced an increase in funding to the new horizons for seniors program in the 2005 budget. The overall budget will be increased to \$15 million in 2005-06 and will reach \$25 million by 2007-08. That is fantastic news.

As a result of these increased investments, at least twice as many projects will receive funding in the first year to expand support for community based projects led by seniors. This means tens of thousands more Canadians will be able to take part in projects that build vibrant communities by including and empowering seniors.

These projects may range from harnessing seniors' experience through mentorship to expanding volunteer activities for seniors and other vulnerable groups, to strengthening relationships across generations. Any society that fails to recognize its most accomplished citizens and that misses the opportunity to put their skills to good use does a disservice to those individuals. It does an even greater disservice to itself.

For all these reasons we need this legislation, Bill C-22, to create Social Development Canada, a powerful new vehicle to advance the interests of Canada's seniors. Budget 2005 has now provided a foundation for the department to further its mandate and role to help enable seniors live their elderly years in dignity. In so doing we will create a stronger society that benefits us all.

I urge my hon. colleagues to give their stamp of approval to this legislation so Social Development Canada can carry on this vitally important work and become the voice of social development in Canada.

*Government Orders*

● (1235)

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have been in the House for several months now. Anyone who has heard me speak knows my tendency to defend widows and orphans, and the interests of Quebec and Quebecers. So, a bill like this, which will force us once again to beg and negotiate for what was our rightful share in the first place, makes me a little mad. Obviously, my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I will not be voting in favour of this bill.

I was listening to my colleague from Beaches—East York talk about how important this bill is for seniors, since each couple will receive an additional \$700 per year, by the end of 2007.

Everyone says that seniors are extremely important to our society, and this is true. In my municipality, 38% of seniors aged 65 and over are over 75 years of age. This represents about 20,000 people in Laval. That is a lot of people.

Seniors over 75 did not learn to ask for anything; they got used to making do with what they had. They lived through the depression, the second world war and some even lived through the first world war. They raised their children without any help from anyone. They were very poor, but got by nonetheless. They learned what was meant by social solidarity. Now these people do not know how to ask for anything. They never did and they are too proud to do it now.

The government says it will give them \$700 a month per couple. A couple means two people. Often, unfortunately, the man in the relationship dies much sooner than the woman. As a result, a woman remains alone and is much poorer than a man alone, yet she raised the family and gave them everything. She nourished her children physically, emotionally and spiritually. She took care of her children and grandchildren, whom she still often looks after. The government thinks they will be pleased with that amount of money and that it will be enough to let them end their days in dignity and respect. That scares me.

We were talking about caregivers. These are not just people who take care of sick or disabled children. Far too often these caregivers are seniors and they are women. Quite often, by the time they are 75, they have already been providing care to their spouse for five years or more. They are entitled to tax credits, which will now be increased to \$5,000 at the most. What good does that do for someone not earning a living or receiving an income? How do they benefit from a \$5,000 tax credit? That is not what they need.

Seniors who are caregivers need services and money to provide services, including respite care. That is what they need. According to Hélène Thibault, director general of the Alzheimer Society of Quebec, they do not need tax credits, but money to buy assistive devices or hire someone who will provide respite care.

And we have not even talked about the seniors from ethnocultural minorities yet. Getting services is even more difficult for them since they cannot speak English, or French. They were often brought to this country by their own children to take care of their grandchildren while the parents try to further their career. They are the ones who raised their grandchildren, and because they had to stay home, they did not develop a social network. Today, they are very old.

● (1240)

When the children cannot take care of their parents anymore, they find a residence or an apartment for seniors where all services are supposed to be provided. But in reality, this is not the case, because the children are still busy with their career or their business and the parents are left alone without services.

We should also not forget seniors with a mental handicap. Instead of spending ever more money on the creation of departments or the development of structures, such as the Secretariat for Seniors, which will cost \$13 million, should we not use this money to help our seniors? Would this money not be better spent if we gave it to provinces and territories so they could meet the needs of their citizens? This is what should be done in fact.

I will now turn my attention to compassionate leave. I am talking, once again, about seniors, but there are so many other areas that this department wants to take control of. I do not understand. The compassionate care leave program was put in place in January 2004. This program is so far from meeting people's needs that, until now, only 5% of allocated funds have been distributed. The CBC did a story on May 8 in which it was mentioned that, in order to qualify for this compassionate leave, the person receiving the care must be either a father, mother, child or spouse. Moreover, the caregiver must have accumulated 600 hours of work in the last year, and he or she must have a medical certificate proving that the sick person will die within six months. This is quite something.

As a society, we are constantly moving backwards. We really are a society that only cares about its own individualistic needs. The caregiver must prove that the sick person will die within six months.

I had breast cancer five years ago. I had no one helping me. I did not ask for anyone's help. Even if I had been certain of dying within six months, believe me I would not have told anyone. These are not things we like to talk about or revel in. We do not like to appear weak to our children and parents. People from my generation are proud. We like to be able to do things. We are part of the so-called sandwich generation. We look after our parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren. However, when we get sick, things get complicated. We are definitely not going to tell our children or grandchildren to take a compassionate leave because we are going to die within six months. Sometimes, even doctors cannot say how long it might take.

It is no wonder that only \$8 million was distributed out of the \$190 million that is available annually. This means that \$182 million stayed in a fund, instead of being transferred to Quebec and the provinces, which will again have to beg and negotiate to get this money.

Considering that its programs are so ill-suited, it is clear that this government does not understand the issue.

*Government Orders*

Now for the social economy. The government keeps telling everyone who will listen that it wants to work in conjunction with the other parties, that it wants things to work for the sake of the public. Yet when the opportunity to prove it comes along, it does not take advantage of it.

My colleague from Ahuntsic has toured to discuss the social economy and she heads a round table. Although it is not a parliamentary committee, she invited no one from the opposition to take part in these exchanges. Yet she is well aware that a number of us have a good grasp of the social economy because we have worked in it for a number of years. Quebec alone has 7,000 businesses in the social economy sector, which represent about 125,000 jobs.

These Quebec businesses generate yearly sales figures of \$17.2 billion on top of their contribution to the social development of their communities. These businesses operate in a wide variety of areas: recycling, child care, home care and so forth.

I myself worked in that sector for over nine years as the assistant director of a home care agency, the *Coopérative de soutien à domicile de Laval*. This social economy enterprise helps seniors remain in their homes with respect and dignity. It has just celebrated its tenth year in operation and already has more than 100 employees and annual business of over \$1 million.

• (1245)

I believe we are managing quite well as far as the social economy is concerned, and still wonder why we need to negotiate constantly with this government in order to receive our entitlement in order to help our economy advance.

Getting back to the subject of child care, my Quebec colleague spoke about this for some time last week in connection with this bill. The hon. member for Laval—*Les Îles* spoke of the importance of our children, of how they are the most important resource we have.

At the present time, more than one million children in Canada are not getting enough to eat. And the reason for that is that there are more than one million parents who are also not getting enough to eat because they do not have access to employment insurance.

When I see the EI statistics, I cannot help but laugh. They claim that Canada has the lowest unemployment rate. Understandably, because only 50% of contributors are entitled to benefits. We have a low unemployment rate because of the low entitlement rate.

The member for Laval—*Les Îles* should attend the next meeting of her Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. She needs to support, as the committee has, a decent EI fund, which is to say an independent one.

As for the guaranteed income supplement, I will not address it since my colleague will do so later. This is a topic particularly near and dear to his heart, for which he has been fighting tirelessly.

In addition, with respect to child care, in the last election campaign, the federal government promised to invest \$5 billion over five years toward a Canada-wide system meeting national standards imposed by the federal government. This, when the central government does not even have the authority to make decisions

about what is going on in the provinces and territories. It is having enough difficulty as it is assuming its responsibilities in its own jurisdictions.

Earlier, my colleague from Dartmouth—*Cole Harbour* touched on the veterans' program. This program, which is new this year, does not include those who, throughout the war, supported the people who fought, without asking for anything in return because they did not want to be a burden on society. Today, they are older and their spouses have passed away, but they are not entitled to this supposedly generous assistance provided to veterans and their spouses.

Before meddling in other governments' business in their fields of jurisdiction, the federal government should be taking care of its own business in its own fields of jurisdiction. Things would work much better.

Among other election promises, the government said it would provide Quebec with funding for child care with no strings attached. We have all heard the social development minister say that time and time again.

The tune has changed now. but the fact is that Quebec's child care system is used as a model because it is the best in the world, as recognized by the OECD. Inspiration is drawn from Quebec's system to develop others across Canada. Afraid of losing a crucial vote, the Liberal government gave the other provinces money on the spot in an attempt to buy votes. That is its way of ensuring that those members on its side of the House will vote with the government on the crucial day. That is despicable. I am ashamed for the government.

• (1250)

In the meantime, we, in Quebec the recognized leader in this area, continue to beg and negotiate. We keep coming back to that. The provinces and territories are having to beg the central government and negotiate with it in areas that belong to them and for which they should be getting funding in order to meet their responsibilities to their citizens. This is terrible. It is unheard of. It is getting worse and worse. Things are not working out.

Happily, I am very proud to be a Bloc member and to represent the interests of Quebecers. My colleagues are doing the same thing in all areas. This arrangement helps limit government infringement and lack of inhibition.

The introduction of a pan-Canadian day care system is of no use to Quebec, on the contrary.

Seniors were mentioned earlier. Last week, my colleague from Sault Ste. Marie, whom I listened to, because I like him, aligned himself with the Bloc's position. Like us, he had realized just how bad the bill could be. He said that, after contributing throughout their life to improving things for their family and their community, seniors deserved nothing less than respect and to be allowed to live their remaining days with dignity.

For this to happen, there has to be social housing, well structured systems and a health care system that meets the needs of seniors. It is incorrect to say that seniors are the reason our health care system is in such bad shape. It has been shown that only 5% of seniors use the health care system.

*Government Orders*

We must not forget that, in terms of health, we were obliged to beg and negotiate once again, to obtain the funds required to carry out our responsibilities. It is always this way.

I hope that the hon. members in this House have seen enough and understood the way the government works to reject this bill. Who in this House can assure me that promises made will be kept and will be properly acted on? No one can, because not one promise made has been kept. Only in the two weeks prior to the crucial vote I referred to earlier were promises kept.

There must be no illusions. The government does not seem to be there to help people. It seems to be there to cling to office in every way possible and imaginable. I will not give it the opportunity to do so with my constituents' money. I will thus oppose this bill.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am deeply affected by the speech of my colleague from Laval. I am the vice-chairperson of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Moreover, the leader of our political party has seen fit to create a social development committee to follow this government closely and show Quebecers how much the federal government's intrusion in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces is costing them.

Consequently, this issue is a very clear illustration of the intrusion into provincial jurisdictions. The social objective that this government purports to give itself is not social; it is a visibility objective. Now that the luxurious sponsorship program no longer exists, the Liberal Party is recruiting members from among social groups and vulnerable clientele. This government is largely trying to bring them into line. We know very well that, when there is no longer money in the fund, the benefit is withdrawn.

We are being told that the Bloc Québécois is insensitive to social issues. On the contrary, we are very sensitive to them. This is why we are saying no to this bill. Duplicating and copying forward-looking Quebec policies—that is the real objective of this Department of Social Development.

I would like my colleague to talk about the fiscal imbalance issues. For the provinces, in this case Quebec, what is the daily impact of these drastic cuts, whether it is through the Canada social transfer or other programs? This could be one avenue. I would like my colleague to speak directly to the people who are listening to us at this time. We know very well that we are in a closed environment here.

• (1255)

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Speaker, indeed, we know very well that the fiscal imbalance underlies a social imbalance, particularly in Quebec. I am sure that it is the same thing elsewhere. We hear more and more about that imbalance from the other provinces. Consequently, children are deprived of a decent education. Parents cannot find child care because there are not enough places. Seniors are denied services because there is not enough money for them. Youth education is under constraint because there is not enough money for the needs that exist. Scholarships have become loans because there is not enough money for education.

These areas are all essential and basic foundations of a strong society. A society must have the means to pay for its needs. Right now, because provinces and territories are crippled by the federal government, Quebec cannot pay for its needs and that is a direct consequence of the fiscal imbalance.

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have been an elected member for quite some time. I was a member in Quebec City and I have been here since the year 2000. It always feels good to hear a statement such as the one the member for Laval has just made. We realize just how much she knows about people's needs. This has been her work, her passion. When I listen to her, I am even more outraged to see the federal government wasting money by encroaching on provincial jurisdictions, when needs within the population are so great.

The member for Laval mentioned a short while ago that there are 7,000 businesses operating in the social economy sector in Quebec. These are dedicated people, who relish coming to the rescue, helping society, elderly people, people who have lower incomes, those who have needs. Instead of giving the money back to Quebec, parallel structures will be set up, which makes no sense, because the structures are already there. It is not structures that we need, but money and a government that minds its own business. Minding its own business means looking after it, but not interfering in the others' business means giving the money to the provinces so that they too can look after their own affairs.

I would like her to persuade us even further. I see it as a daily task. We have not yet managed to do it, but with her eloquence, perhaps the hon. member for Laval will be able to find the needed words. I have toured all of Quebec, I have met elderly people and I find it painful every time our money is being wasted on structures rather than helping the already existing ones. I would like her to talk about the 7,000 social economy businesses that exist in Quebec and about how we might provide them with further assistance.

• (1300)

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Speaker, before answering my colleague's question, I would like to repeat what my colleague for Québec said earlier about programs cutting subsidies and causing downstream resources to disappear.

In the area of social development and human resources development, we used to have a program called SCPI. That program ended its cash investments and developed extremely strict eligibility criteria for financing. Several social economy enterprises received funds from SCPI to help the homeless and the poor. Right now, they must lay off people because they cannot satisfy the main criterion which is to become autonomous. How can an enterprise become autonomous when the people it serves do not have a single penny in their pockets? That is nonsense.

*Government Orders*

The Coopérative de soutien à domicile that I mentioned earlier is a social economy enterprise, and there are a number of them in Quebec; they help people. There also are cooperatives or social economy enterprises that do other work, such as recycling clothing and other items, and that put them back to society by putting them on sale in their stores. These enterprises are essential and, at the same time, it is unfortunate that they are essential, because we should have been able to find solutions with the means that we have. When we say that we have billions of dollars in surplus every year, we should have been able to find the means to serve these people in an honourable way. What makes me angriest is that the government is giving a handout to seniors—\$19 more a month in January—who receive the guaranteed income supplement. It will be \$38 a month in January 2007 as part of the guaranteed income supplement. This hurts me and I am ashamed for our leaders who make the decisions on this, who put this in the budget.

It is awful that we are doing this to people who did everything to build today's society. It is as if we are warehousing them in institutions and leaving them to die. We are not giving them the means to live with dignity. The only enterprises that can help them a little are social economy enterprises. However, they must be funded adequately. They must have the ability to grow appropriately. To this end, we must have special funds that will go to the provinces and that will then be distributed to social economy enterprises. I have little hope in this regard, because we know well the centralizing will of this government. However, I find it very unfortunate.

**Mr. Alain Boire (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-22 establishes the new Department of Social Development over which presides the Minister of Social Development. This bill amends or repeals certain related acts. It sets out the rules applicable to the protection and the making available of personal information obtained under departmental programs, other than those governed by similar codes found in the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act.

The focus of the Bloc Québécois is to promote the sovereignty of Quebec and to defend the interests of the nation, the people and the state of Quebec. Under the premise of defending this consensus reached in Quebec, Parliament cannot confirm the creation of a department with a mandate to interfere in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces.

The new department created by the Prime Minister on December 12, 2003 has some 12,000 public servants who are responsible for managing close to \$53 billion “to secure and strengthen Canada's social foundations while respecting federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions”. The Minister of Social Development was taken from human resources development, which is becoming a department that coordinates the activities of the Minister of State for Families and Caregivers.

Quebec does not need an administrative structure or an additional federal policy. Its social programs are already largely more advanced than throughout Canada. What Quebec truly needs is the money it is being denied because of the fiscal imbalance created by the Liberals, in order to properly fund Quebec programs.

Out of a \$53 billion total budget, \$51 billion was allocated in direct subsidies to individuals through two main programs: the Canada Pension Plan and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

In order to better understand the nature of the Bloc Québécois position on the creation of the department, just look at the list of benefits offered by the department, which is claiming to respect provincial jurisdictions, while its mandate is full of intrusions into provincial jurisdictions.

The Auditor General was quite critical in her remarks about the government's practice of netting, or offsetting expenditures against revenues. She was especially critical of the government's apathy toward the many warnings it has received.

In previous fiscal years, both gross and net amounts were shown in the Public Accounts of Canada. Thus, the government used to charge certain expenses against revenues in the operating statement. This did not have any impact on the annual surplus, but the statement presented lower expenses and revenues for the year. For several years, we have objected to this practice. The items in question are the Canada child tax benefit, the revenues of certain Crown corporations and the GST credits.

I am very disappointed and I find abusive that the government should keep using net amounts in its analysis of revenues and expenses in the annual fiscal report.

Obviously, any department has programs and additional expenses. It is essential to make a systematic analysis of each program of the new department.

The retroactive payment of guaranteed income supplement benefits is a fight the Bloc Québécois has been waging for years. The federal government has unfairly deprived and is still depriving many Quebecers and Canadians who are among the most vulnerable in our society, from benefits they are owed. In my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry alone, the federal government owes \$6 million to needy seniors.

In December 2001, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and Status of Persons with Disabilities made public its report on the guaranteed income supplement. It was revealed that more than 270 Canadians and 68 Quebecers were entitled to the guaranteed income supplement, but did not get it.

From 1993 to 2001, almost \$3.2 billion in Canada and at least \$800 million in Quebec were kept from low income seniors who were entitled to these benefits. Thanks to the efforts of the Bloc Québécois, at least 25,000 more seniors now meet the conditions and benefit from the guaranteed income supplement.

• (1305)

This represents at least \$100 million in recurring funds for Quebecers that the federal government tried to deny low-income seniors.

*Government Orders*

Despite a Liberal promise in the 2004 throne speech to increase guaranteed income supplement benefits, the federal government still refuses to agree to one of the Bloc Québécois' most important demands: full retroactivity for seniors who were entitled to benefits and never received them, because they failed to receive adequate information. Currently, the federal government has limited this retroactivity to just 11 months, thereby penalizing seniors in need yet again.

In the 2004 budget, platform and throne speech, the Liberals made the disabled a major issue. They announced a number of measures, such as tax deductions and other measures for the integration of the disabled.

In 2002, the Bloc Québécois had actively participated in the work of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, in order, among other things, to improve the disability tax credit. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of improving the living conditions for the disabled through tax deductions and tax credits provided that Quebec's jurisdictions are respected.

The Bloc Québécois believes, however, it would be easier to integrate the disabled into the labour market if the Quebec government was made responsible for this client group. The federal government's direct involvement with community organizations, through the social development partnerships program, the voluntary sector initiative and the new horizons program, is blatant interference in areas of jurisdiction belonging to Quebec and the provinces, which have ties to these organizations through the Quebec health care and social services network.

It is obvious that the Quebec government is much better equipped to assess their needs and prevent the scattering of federal funds, since Quebec operates in accordance with a clear and well-defined social policy and stable, long-term funding.

The early years centres program is an experimental initiative to help communities determine the educational development of young children by examining the quantity, quality and scope of programs and services required to meet these needs.

These initiatives are a clear duplication of educational programs in Quebec. Quebec already has extensive expertise, thanks to its network of health care professionals and public education network, as a result of which it has full jurisdiction in this area.

So, the Bloc calls on the government to withdraw from areas of Quebec's jurisdiction and give it back the money it is putting into these programs so that Quebec can improve its day care system, because this system has proven itself and is well suited to the needs of Quebeckers.

The national child benefit provides financial support to low income families with children through a program of national child benefits calculated on the basis of income and paid out under the federal child tax benefit program.

Under the terms of the national child benefit, the federal government also provides additional financial support to low income families with children through the national child benefit supplement, which is an integral part of the Canada child tax benefit.

The thinly veiled aim of the federal involvement in this sector is Canada's visibility, as in the sponsorship scandal. As the member for Don Valley West and the chair of the subcommittee on children and youth at risk put it: the main aim is to have the public and history remember the Liberal government. As this member puts it, the government has done nothing worth remembering.

To justify its action, the government is pointing to the social union agreement. Quebec did not sign this agreement, it will be remembered. If the government really wants to honour what is being done in Quebec, it should not only recognize it, but should provide financial compensation when the program, which already exists in Quebec, is set up.

Quebec did its own consulting nearly 20 years ago. There is a consensus in Quebec and it is respected by the government. A Canadian policy on family and early childhood that includes national standards, would be paternalistic.

The example of the \$5 day care speaks for itself. Some families lose more in deductions than they earn because of day care measures. Quebec has called for tax harmonization for these families. Ottawa, however, has refused, saving itself \$70 million on the backs of Quebec families, which need it more.

● (1310)

At the present time, the Canadian taxation system has no universal measure which recognize and takes specifically into account the responsibilities of parents with dependent children. Canada is one of the few developed countries that does not provide tax benefits to certain families with children.

The Bloc Québécois feels it is self-evident that the responsibility for a comprehensive family policy is incumbent upon the Government of Quebec. The federal government can, and must, make an additional fiscal effort for parents in need.

This is why the Government of Quebec is proposing the inauguration of a refundable tax credit for all families with dependent children under the age of 18, including those whose income is too low for federal income tax. Low income families paying little or no income tax would thus also be able to benefit from a lighter tax burden.

The \$7 a day child care system, which has provided Quebec parents with child care at reduced rates, has also saved the federal government considerable sums, but these have not been passed on to the Government of Quebec, nor will they ever be.

Since parents are paying only \$7 a day for each child in care, as opposed to the actual cost of \$25, their federal tax deductions and therefore their refunds have decreased accordingly.

Consequently, the federal government has saved close to \$1 billion since Quebec brought in its \$5 child care in 1998. In the first year of the Quebec program, the federal government saved \$108.6 million for only 82,000 \$5 child care spaces in Quebec.

*Government Orders*

As the number of child care spaces increases in Quebec, Ottawa's tax savings increase as well. In 2003, federal savings totalled \$235 million.

So, over six years, this makes close to \$1 billion Ottawa has saved at the expense of young Quebec families, families in need.

The Bloc Québécois calls for Quebec to retain its right to opt out with compensation as far as child care services are concerned, and also for the federal government to modify its taxation system in order to allow the full deduction based on the actual cost of the child care spaces, not the parental contribution of \$7.

In closing, the Bloc Québécois cannot support the creation of a Department of Social Development that, by definition, interferes in the jurisdictions of Quebec. This government keeps promising to respect the jurisdictions of Quebec, but, in fact, it does just the opposite.

The government must agree to the Bloc Québécois subamendment requiring that it fully respect provincial jurisdictions while putting more money into social programs and imposing Canada-wide rules for the allocation of funds.

The Bloc Québécois has always defended the interests of Quebecers, and in that regard, it is essential that Quebec's areas of responsibility be respected.

The consensus reached in our National Assembly have recognized that the Quebec government has full jurisdiction in the areas under its responsibility because it has the structure and the institutions needed to link all bodies. The Quebec government can recognize the real needs and develop a fair policy and detailed action programs to meet them.

We believe that the federal government must recognize once and for all that Quebec, although its leeway has been considerably reduced by the fiscal imbalance, has still managed to implement internationally renowned quality programs.

Quebec has been successful because it listens to people and because it has a responsibility to create relationships with the stakeholders in targeted areas in order to effectively identify the needs. The Bloc Québécois will never agree to the creation of a department that not only has the mandate to duplicate and copy Quebec's avant-garde policies, but that also prevents Quebec from fully developing its own social programs.

This is not about visibility, but about respect for the integrity, security and health of all Quebecers.

• (1315)

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have listened carefully to the speech made by my colleague, which was articulate and laid out the issues well. This has given me an overview of the problem and I thank him for that.

As regards parental leave, it remains a matter of confidence in this government. Could my colleague tell me why we would pass a bill that only makes promises in areas that are outside its jurisdiction? Even in areas which are within its jurisdiction, nothing is being done.

In relation to the parental leave program, it took the federal government 10 years to respect the consensus in Quebec. To this day,

it has not yet withdrawn its appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, which is scheduled to rule soon on constitutional responsibility over parental leave. I know that the Bloc Québécois and the Government of Québec have always asked the federal government to withdraw this appeal in order to demonstrate its good faith during the negotiations, something that has never been done.

Does my colleague believe that the federal government really has the will to negotiate with the provinces and territories, or is this just another trick?

• (1320)

**Mr. Alain Boire:** Madam Speaker, indeed, I am convinced that the federal government is once again out to trick the people of Quebec and the other provinces. The will is not there. We know full well that this government only makes promises and keeps very few of them.

As to the parental leave, these are just that, promises. The current government is constantly at odds with Quebec's jurisdictions. Quebec is in the better position to meet the needs of its population. It knows exactly what is going on in the field, because it is there constantly. The Liberal government should undertake the necessary transfers to counter the fiscal imbalance in order to help people in need.

As the Bloc Québécois youth critic, I toured Quebec and was able to see firsthand what was happening everywhere. Non-profit organizations all over Quebec have little resources available.

The taxes paid by Quebecers to the federal government are kept here in Ottawa and are not redistributed as they should. This deprives many needy organizations that have a hard time making ends meet and that try to help young people, who represent our future.

In fact, we are setting a bad example for them, in the sense that we are paying taxes to an institution that does not redistribute the money as it should. It is important for the federal government to realize that, by doing so, it is depriving a number of educational institutions and organizations in the field that really need this money.

For example, the summer career placements were recently cut. In the riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry, a 40% cut was made to youth services. This 40% cut in a riding located just outside Montreal has the effect of encouraging young people to leave their region and move to large urban centres. This is money that communities need.

Another example is the region of Huntingdon, in my riding, which was severely affected by the closure of the textile plants. In that region, 53% of the people do not have a high school education. Young people are not inclined to stay in the region, because the summer career placement program cannot help them get a job, and this encourages them to leave. So, young people are leaving the regions, because there is no incentive for them to come back and work there.

*Government Orders*

Therefore, it is very important for the federal government to understand that, instead of splitting up departments at a cost of millions of dollars, it should invest this money where needs are the greatest. The provinces, including Quebec, know which sectors need money the most. The federal government should transfer this \$53 billion to the provinces, which will truly deal, on a long term basis, with existing problems in the field.

**Mr. Réal Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in my riding, like elsewhere in Quebec, agencies and initiatives were put in place and we can say that they reached a very high level of perfection. Whether it is child care, cooperatives, social economy enterprises, maternity or parental leave, these are all initiatives that leaders in Quebec succeeded in keeping in spite of a dire lack of funds received from the bank, that is from the federal government. Indeed, it is the federal government that managed to accumulate surpluses. In spite of a lack of money, Quebec leaders succeeded in implementing a series of initiatives that are envied by all Canadian provinces.

That brings me to the question I want to ask my colleague. What is it that the party in power always wants to interfere in areas under provincial jurisdiction? Yet, it knows very well that the initiatives in place work extremely well and could work even better if federal money was distributed fairly.

How would the hon. member explain this desire of the party in power to interfere in areas under provincial jurisdiction where the public is highly satisfied with existing measures?

• (1325)

**Mr. Alain Boire:** Mr. Speaker, in my view, the reason why the government is interfering in areas under provincial jurisdiction is very simple—to increase the visibility of the federal government, Canada. It is interfering in our areas of jurisdiction and telling Quebecers that Canada is there to help them. This is nothing more than a trick because nowadays Quebec is capable of meeting all its own needs. The federal government is duplicating Quebec's areas of jurisdiction in order to interfere and to take over from Quebec's programs. This duplication serves no useful purpose and just confuses people. People are calling us to say that they are faced with two programs, one provincial and one federal and want to know which one they should choose. These programs are often split in two and they have to apply to both to receive a fair amount.

I want to go back to the issue of transfers and fiscal imbalance. The federal government must absolutely transfer to Quebec the money that is owed to us, because we are the only province that can meet its own needs, that knows exactly what is going on in the field and in these organizations. This must also be done to avoid a useless bureaucracy. Having another department, another program, means that non-profit organizations, which often have limited resources, will have to do more paperwork. Their resources are often volunteers. They spend time filling out all these forms, but this takes a lot of the time that they should spend to do the important things for which they are there. It is important that the federal government transfer these funds to the provinces.

I also want to talk about the federal government's claim that it never has any money to meet our needs. However, when it wants to put the word "Canada" everywhere, it does find money to do so. In my riding, the workers affected by the loss of 1,000 jobs in six

Huntingdon plants are asking for a program for older worker adjustment. It is estimated that, for all of Canada, such a program might cost at the most \$50 million. The government is telling us that it does not have any money to help textile workers. In 1997, that program only cost \$26 million.

Instead of creating all sorts of new departments, why does the government not follow up on these requests, which would definitely help people in the field?

• (1330)

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it seems to me that we are repeating ourselves and that we are not done repeating ourselves, although, personally, I am confident that within a matter of months or years all this will change and we in Quebec will be doing our own thing. In fact, we have been repeating ourselves for quite a while. Today, we are talking about fiscal imbalance. A case in point is the establishment of a new department which I call the department of social encroachment. The government is taking steps to get involved in all the provinces and in Quebec in particular. It is unpleasant to have the government interfere in Quebec, which is increasingly autonomous and can do so well, as some members have pointed out, that it is sometimes a model for the other provinces.

When I was an MNA in Quebec City, I saw foreign governments come to study our legislation. Quebec is a leader in social development, as in every other field. The problem however, and it is a major one, is that 45% or 50% of our revenues go to the federal government. That is our money, but, as my hon. colleague from Laval said, we have to beg for every little bit we can get back. This money hardly makes it to us because the federal government finds ways to duplicate services in order to assert its presence in Quebec, which is having a discouraging and demoralizing effect.

As I said, this is nothing new. I will not hide my age. I am 69, and the first political speech I heard was one Maurice Duplessis made in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. I was with my father and I heard Maurice Duplessis say he needed a strong mandate to get back our share of the spoils. I asked my father what he meant by that, and my father explained to me how the federal system worked. He said, "We give money to the federal government, but it is not easy to get it back, and when the government agrees to give it back, it is based on its priorities, not ours". Ever since then, I have become more involved in politics. So, Duplessis was getting back his share of the spoils.

There was also Jean Lesage, who had a huge mandate and who changed things in Quebec. He spoke of being master in our own home. He knew full well that we needed to stop sending our money to the federal government.

Then there was Daniel Johnson senior, who said, "It is equality or independence. Give us back our money or else."

Then there was Robert Bourassa, whose knees were shaking a bit. However, in 1971, he slammed the door in Victoria when the federal government did not want to give Quebec its due.

*Government Orders*

This continued with the sovereignty association of René Lévesque and continues today. In fact, if the last referendum, in 1995, had not been stolen from us—and we now know that it was—Quebec would now be a country. Nevertheless, despite the fact that it was stolen from us, the referendum result was 49.4% for the yes side.

With everything that happens to us and every time we speak here, every time services are developed that encroach on provincial jurisdictions, we are humbled more and more. It makes us realize that we will be handling our own affairs in Quebec one day. Personally, I hope still to be in politics when it happens, even if it is my last mandate. I can assure you that I will still be there to work on it.

We talked about this a lot. I have spent my life on the road. I have seen human misery in every sense of the word. The hon. member for Laval also spoke about this earlier and she knows what she is talking about. It is unbelievable to see the extent of services that are close to those who need them and that are at the ready. There are some 7,000 social economy enterprises in Quebec.

•(1335)

There are CLSCs in the picture. The municipalities are increasingly able to deal with at risk or vulnerable individuals.

However, instead of giving the money to the Quebec government to distribute in keeping with the priorities of Quebecers—and this is true in the other provinces too, I am sure—the federal government has just created the department of social interference or social duplication. It has come to set up house in our jurisdiction, establish parallel offices, wave a maple leaf and show that the federal government is there to provide services. Unfortunately, once they are well established, there is little money available and no more services. However, public servants have been hired.

The study by Jacques Léonard has proved that, over the last five or six years, the public service has grown by 49,000 employees. Thanks to this new department, there will be 12,000 to 14,000 more public servants. This will cost the federal government close to \$10 billion more per year.

For the 10 provinces, this represents approximately \$1 billion per province. Some provinces would get more than others, because the population differs in each province. Just think what the provinces could do with the extra money, since they know what services are needed. They have the expertise and are familiar with the public. It is appalling to see a government waste our money and energy and try to outmanoeuvre us.

If Quebec creates a good policy, the federal government copies it. Child care is one such example. It is amazing to see what Quebec has done in this field. We have absolutely no objections if others want to benefit from our experience. We are generous by nature. But our rightful share, however, is not forthcoming.

The Prime Minister said that Quebec was to be the model for the child care system throughout Canada and that Quebec would get its money unconditionally. We now know that four or five provinces have already signed. Quebec still has not signed. Why? Because Quebec would have to agree to conditions. Although the feds followed our example and benefited from our expertise, they are now

imposing conditions on us before we can get our rightful share of the money.

I can tell you that this could have been so simple, but it has become demoralizing. I recall something I heard at some meeting. The question asked was “How is a country administered?” The answer: “You run a country like you run a family”. Families take their income or incomes, and then distribute it according to priorities. That way, there is money for leisure activities, education, health, and probably for holidays. In short, for all the family's needs. The same needs to apply to government.

No one here could run a family, because they cannot run a government. We have lost track of all the energy, the money and the time we have wasted to try to get the message across that the money needs to go back to those who need it most. The Liberal Party may be in power but it does not own this country. It acts as if it did, though.

One needs only look at the sponsorship scandal to see how they have shamelessly had their palms greased. In the parliamentary committee we are inviting para-governmental bodies to come and tell us about their situation. It is scandalous to see the extent to which the government is using the country's funds as if it owned this country.

•(1340)

This is not true. Neither the Liberal Party nor the federal government own Canada. We are the ones our money belongs to. Each province provides its share, as does each individual, and one day they will realize that we are going to take back what is ours and to stop handing it over to them because they are wasting it. I am discouraged by the whole situation. As I have said, we have been hearing the same thing for 50 years. We are getting closer and closer to a solution, but things have not changed in the past 50 years. Flashing the Canadian flag everywhere, putting emblems here, there and everywhere, that was what the sponsorship scandal was all about. And filling up their own pockets is perfectly fine, because they think they own the country. That is basically what they are telling us.

*Government Orders*

In committee, we interviewed André Ouellet, formerly of Canada Post. He became angry because someone called him a thief. Perhaps the word was a little strong. His answer was painful to our ears. He was at Canada Post. He told us not to get upset over a \$2 million expense account. The costs of hotel rooms and meals had to be taken into account. True, there were no receipts for 15% of the expenses, but he had forgotten them. Fifteen per cent of \$2 million is only \$300,000; that is not much. An ordinary worker has to earn \$600,000 to get \$300,000. He laughed, he teased us, it was pretty awful. It was hard to know what to ask that would be logical. While he was a Liberal, he owned this Canada; it was his business. That is the way we see it. You can see it in other parliamentary committees. It really offends me. Things have to change one day, and I can predict that, one day, Quebec will change it. One day, in the not so distant future, we will tell the federal government that no more Quebec money is coming to it. We will hang on to it. Up to now, we have shown we know how to manage things. Whatever the government in Quebec City, it is always infinitely better than what there is federally. Sometimes there is waste in Quebec, but I can tell you that Quebecers are keeping a close eye on it.

Our current government, the Charest government, has made mistakes. Not for too long. When it makes a mistake, it is forced to look at its position. Why? Because Quebecers take to the streets and say what it wants to do makes no sense. It has to take another look at its position. But here, whatever message we send is unheard. I find that really difficult.

I have looked into the seniors issue. There are—as my colleague has said—270,000 Canadians who have been deprived of their guaranteed income supplement over the past 10 or 12 years. Of that number, 68,000 were Quebecers. I have toured Quebec and attended 42 meetings on this. I have seen the terrible poverty. I was with the member for Sherbrooke in his riding, where we learned of one senior who died at age 88 after having an income throughout her old age of \$6,000. The government pocketed \$90,000 when she died. Imagine if she had had that money. She was no one of importance, just someone who raised a family of ten or so children, and surely did not work, so presumably was not seen as entitled to what was coming to her. I met people like that all over Quebec.

It makes no sense that they are coming up today with a bill that will merely complicate things, add more public servants, increase the visibility of the federal government, when this money could have gone to the seniors who have been deprived of \$3.2 billion over the past 10 years. That is very close to \$1 billion for Quebec alone, \$80 million to be exact. Just the structure, the mass of functionaries, the wasted energy could have gone to pay seniors what is owed them. But no, they will not do that.

• (1345)

Conversely, when the federal government is owed money, the retroactivity goes back 10 years. And if the government finds a person at fault, the period of retroactivity then extends indefinitely and there are fines and interest to pay.

In our region, an older couple realized, when they were 70, that they had been deprived of \$4,000 a year. These are regular people. I was able to get \$4,000 for them for the past 11 months. This brings

their total loss down to \$16,000, \$16,000 that the government is keeping in its coffers and using to build structures.

I have had enough, really enough, of this system. The government side never listens. We are asked questions, but when we answer in accordance with the wishes of the people, they do not pay any attention. The Liberals own the country and almost own its inhabitants. I am sad to see that we cannot advance issues further.

Seniors have been robbed of \$3.2 billion in recent years. They will not be taking this money with them when they die. I pledge that, as long as I and the Bloc Québécois are in this place, we will pursue this. The day will come when the government has to agree to grant retroactivity to seniors, because they have earned that money and it belongs to them. Unfortunately, I can see that it is in the interest of the federal government to delay payment. The people involved are old; they are not youngsters. Those 75, 80 or 85 years old have precious little time left. The government is saving money with each passing day by constantly delaying payment. The day might come when it is generous enough to pay what it owes, but by then all of those who were owed the money will have died.

For now, the government has generously announced that payments will be made over the next six years, although the money was taken over the past 12 years. It is no longer exactly the same people. The government will be giving back \$2.7 billion over the next six years, but took away \$3.2 billion over the past 10 years. Those involved will have changed in the meantime. We cannot really call that social justice.

There is no doubt that I support my colleague. So long as we can, we will oppose this bill. In fact, it creates a department of social encroachment. We have enough encroachment. We are going to fight it with the energy of the desperate, until we have hope of keeping all our marbles at home and making Quebec the country of our dreams.

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Ianno (Minister of State (Families and Caregivers), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I just came in to put my book in and I was listening to the hon. member. We have had this discussion and debate for quite a while.

As he knows, the \$2.7 billion is \$700 million a year when fully implemented for low income seniors, \$12,400 that they receive with an increase of \$433 per year. I would be surprised if the hon. member would want to deprive his low income seniors from receiving that. With his vote against the budget, I am very shocked and surprised because on the one hand he speaks as if he cares about the seniors, which by the way I do believe, but on the other hand, he ignores that he is voting against those same seniors, and not only those who did not apply for the GIS who were eligible, but he is going against all the low income seniors in his riding who actually do receive the GIS because that \$433 increase is not a lot in an overall number but it is a great deal compared to what they have received over the last 20-plus years.

I know that in the government they have been reaching out, sending out letters and outreach workers to ensure that anyone who is eligible for the guaranteed income supplement will receive it.

*Government Orders*

I ask the hon. member, who has been a member in this House for many years, if he chose to write in his householders or his 10 percenters, or search for those low income seniors who might not have applied. Did he do all that good work to ensure that each of those persons who deserve the money actually applies? The role of a member of Parliament is to ensure that their constituents receive all that is available to them. That is what upsets me in this House sometimes.

It is very nice to give the rhetorical storyline that the government is taking six years back, six years forward. If only he would deal with the facts as they are presented.

In January of this year it will be a \$218 increase for those low income seniors and then fully implemented a year later. It was supposed to be over five years but we reduced it to over two years to speed it up because we care about our seniors. We created the Seniors Citizens Secretariat, with the budget they voted against, to ensure that seniors across the country have a person at the cabinet table, have research facilities and have all that is theirs because they helped build this great country.

There is a lot that the hon. member is speaking to which I believe but on the other hand he voted against the budget which would have allowed this to happen, especially with the new horizons program. When we take into account the organizations that will help seniors to become less isolated, there are many good measures in this budget that the hon. member and his party are voting against.

It is very nice to tell his constituents that he cares but he should put it into action, go against his party and pass the budget for seniors because they ultimately will be the beneficiaries of this and that is what is going to count.

What did the hon. member do to ensure any of his constituents, any low income seniors, actually were able to receive the benefit and not just talk about it and then cry later?

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I see the minister has a desire to change things.

I thank him too for giving me the opportunity to brag a little. To his question, "What did he do?", I answer that I travelled around Quebec. I even went beyond Quebec, as far as Vancouver. We learned that 270,000 Canadians, including 68,000 Quebecers, had been deprived of the guaranteed income supplement. We passed this information on, so that today the number is less than half. Indeed, efforts are still being made to find some 100,000 Canadians and 25,000 Quebecers.

An effort was also made to get the minister to improve contact with seniors. The the GIS application form was too difficult for even an accountant to complete. Even an accountant found it difficult. Seniors are often at a disadvantage for various reasons. Still, they were being asked to complete a form that made no sense.

There was a phone number to call to request the guaranteed income supplement, but, at the other end, there was an answering machine. People had to wait sometimes for as long as two hours to

get an answer. Imagine a senior needing information and having to wait so long.

Once when I was interviewed on Radio-Canada in Montreal, before introducing me the host said that his researcher had dialed this number the night before and waited two hours without getting a hold of anyone. That is how seniors were treated.

Today that has changed because the Bloc Québécois took care of it by doing a tour of Quebec. We will take care of it until seniors get their due.

You say that you are investing money in the future, well that is great, but this should have been done a long time ago. There is room for improvement. You should also invest the money that you took from them in the past. It is money you owe them. The 11-month retroactivity does not exist. Often those people are sick. They have ended up in situations where they are unable to ask for what they are owed.

I visited Msgr. Clément, a parish priest in Champlain, three weeks before his death. He died a year and a half ago. Msgr. Clément was a canon lawyer. He was an extremely knowledgeable man. He said to me, "Marcel, I understand your case. I have had three strokes. I can no longer see and I can barely hear. If I did not have good people around me, who would inform me of my rights?" These are your clients.

We have to find a way to get back to these clients and give them their due. When they are lucky enough to discover that they are owed money and that the government is accountable for it, then they should at least receive retroactive payments immediately. It is simple.

Mr. Minister, if you want to do as much work as my colleagues from the Bloc and I have done in the opposition, let us embark on this together and reduce the number to virtually zero.

**An hon. member:** Indeed.

• (1355)

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague and to the minister. Like my colleague, I do think the minister is sincere. Unfortunately, I do not think that his government is acting in good faith. What goes around comes around. As the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain so aptly pointed out, a number of seniors were not reached, because the government did not do what it had to do to locate these people.

When the minister says he doubts my colleague did the work he had to do, I say, "Now wait a minute". The minister should reread the story relating to the guaranteed income supplement. If there is one person who worked for seniors in Quebec and Canada, it is indeed the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

Today, if we decide to vote against the budget, it is not because we do not want our seniors to be treated better. On the contrary, it is precisely because we want them to be treated better. There is money in this budget that is not going where it should be going. There is money going to areas where there is no need for it.

*S. O. 31*

There is a need for social housing. The hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain will elaborate on this issue. If the money were better spent and allocated, and my colleague will agree with me, we would support this budget. Right now though, it is out of the question.

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon:** Madam Speaker, the member for Laval is 100% correct. We had said that we would support the budget under certain conditions. Those conditions are quite simple. For example, the money belonging to the unemployed has to be put back in the EI fund and the money for seniors paid retroactively.

Unfortunately, I will be voting against the budget, because the government does not keep its promises. It have invested too heavily in visibility and not enough in individuals. But the latter are the ones who need money.

The government is the only one who has not acknowledged the fiscal imbalance. I doubt that the minister has even acknowledged it to himself. If only the federal government had fixed this problem and returned the money to the provinces so they can develop their areas of jurisdiction, instead of meddling in them, we would support the budget. However, we know this will not happen.

Some day, I will invite the minister to come to the Quebec nation, where we will keep our money and spend it as we see fit.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### JOB FINDING CLUB

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, I was pleased last week to announce the funding of \$174,000 for a project at the Neighbour to Neighbour Centre in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. This money will go toward the centre's Job Finding Club. The program includes workshops on how to prepare for job interviewing and how to write resumes, employment counselling and computer orientation.

The Job Finding Club also provides critical resources such as Internet and job bank access, city transportation, and child care during workshops. The club boasts and impressive 90% success rate.

I applaud the centre for effectively teaching people the skills and providing the necessary tools and guidance for integration into the workforce. I thank Human Resources and Skills Development for providing this much needed support.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

### RURAL POST OFFICES

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, those of us who represent rural ridings know the importance of postal service to small and remote communities. In 1994 the Liberal government announced a moratorium on the closure of rural post offices. Like so many others, this Liberal promise soon fell by the wayside.

Small and rural post offices have been closing. According to the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, another 750 post offices across the nation are at risk for closure by Canada Post, 15 of them in my riding.

A Canada Post official has stated that supporting small rural post offices is a "heavy burden on the bottom line". Meanwhile the corporation boasted a \$147 million profit last year.

Postal service is essential to my constituents and to the well-being of their small communities. Closure of even a few offices in northern Saskatchewan will mean being forced to travel unreasonable distances to obtain this basic service. My constituents and millions of other Canadians are tired of being treated like second class citizens because of where they live.

The Liberal government's disregard for rural Canadians needs to be packaged up and returned to sender.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### JEAN-MARC FILION

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jean-Marc Filion, a science teacher at the Algonquin catholic high school in North Bay, who will be retiring at the end of the month, after a long and successful career.

Mr. Filion started teaching at the Algonquin school over 30 years ago, in 1974. Since then, thousands of students have studied under him in chemistry, physics, biology and computer science, as well as physical education and Spanish.

Under his supervision, the students have achieved unprecedented success, winning a total of 32 medals at national and international science fairs 19 years in a row, starting in 1986. That is outstanding success.

On behalf of all the hon. members, I would like to thank Jean-Marc for his commitment to his students, his colleagues, the Algonquin catholic high school and his entire community.

Happy retirement, Jean-Marc Filion. You fully deserve it.

\* \* \*

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the exemplary determination of the town of Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton, in my riding, in taking steps toward sustainable development.

In Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton, the municipal corporation and local stakeholders are implementing initiatives to turn their town into an environmentally friendly one.

These initiatives include opening Camping Vert, an environmentally friendly campground, during the summer of 2005. In addition to regular camping activities, activities will be held at the campground to promote ecological awareness, nature discovery and better human interactions with the environment.

That is not all. An environmental study centre was established in Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton. This initiative is designed to develop environmentally friendly ecological solutions.

The municipality is embarking upon a journey toward becoming green. Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton is a future eco-village and a sustainable development model.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### SENATOR ISOBEL FINNERTY

**Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Senator Isobel Finnerty, one of our colleagues in the other place, on the occasion of her retirement from politics.

Appointed to the Senate in 1999, Senator Finnerty has brought commitment, energy, enthusiasm and dedication to public service at the local level in the provincial and federal arenas.

A long time advocate of and a trail blazer for political organization and getting more women involved in the political process, Senator Finnerty has been nationally and internationally recognized for her successes in this field, culminating in 1994 with her invitation to Benin, Africa as an international trainer.

Senator Finnerty's flair for volunteerism was instilled in her at a young age. From the age of 19 until the age of 39 she served as the only woman on the board of the Timmins Parks and Recreation Commission. Since then she has been a tireless volunteer for such organizations as the Stratford YMCA, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Burlington Arts Centre.

I ask all my colleagues to join with me in saluting her.

\* \* \*

●(1405)

#### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in case you have not noticed, summer is coming and everyone is planning summer vacations. All are asking, where can we go?

Why not visit the oldest settled part of North America? Why not come see where the Vikings settled 1,000 years ago? Why not come see famous archaeological sites, such as Lord Baltimore's colony? Why not come see 620 million year old fossils? Why not come see lighthouses, historic sites, scenic parks, wildlife and icebergs?

Why not come visit Cabot Tower from where Marconi sent the first transatlantic message? Why not see the St. John's regatta, North America's oldest sporting event, and visit Cape Spear, our country's most easterly point?

Why not come enjoy our festivals, experience our food, and meet the finest people in the world?

Why not visit Newfoundland and Labrador this summer?

S. O. 31

[Translation]

#### CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the local television station, CJOH, and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario held their 22nd annual telethon yesterday in a spirit of overwhelming enthusiasm and generosity. They raised over \$4.537 million, exceeding the \$4.112 million raised last year. Congratulations and cheers to the organizers and, of course, our donors.

The national liberal caucus golf tournament, held last summer, succeeded in raising \$40,000 for sick kids at CHEO.

Finally, many thanks to the pages of the House of Commons who volunteered their services during the telethon and who wore bright yellow sweaters to become real yellow pages for the event.

Ottawa is a wonderful place to live. Congratulations to all.

\* \* \*

#### LÉONARD BRISSON

**Mr. Bernard Cleary (Louis-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the extraordinary contribution made by Léonard Brisson, a passionate man, who has been involved in archery for over 40 years.

Léonard Brisson is a renowned coach, who worked for 16 years at the Université Laval, took part in the Montreal Olympics, the Pan-American Games in Orlando and led the Quebec team to a number of Canadian championships. In 1987, he founded the Kamentukash archery club in Loretteville.

On behalf of all my constituents in the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent and myself, I want to thank the co-founder of the Kamentukash archery club, and its collaborators and volunteers who help make the future brighter for our young people.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### MUNICIPALITIES

**Mr. Russ Powers (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the recent weekend the Federation of Canadian Municipalities met to discuss the challenges of our 1,100 Canadian municipalities. Overwhelmingly the message sent to Ottawa was to put partisan politics aside and get on with passing the budget.

It seems that the Leader of the Opposition was not listening. Last Saturday the leader of the Conservative Party provided remarks full of weak promises and feigned support for the Liberal government's new deal for cities and communities, a speech that failed to commit to the passing of budget 2005.

Representatives who attended the conference were not fooled by the Leader of the Opposition's promises. They know that he has a long history of not supporting, and actively campaigning against the new deal.

*S. O. 31*

When will the Conservative Party come clean and simply admit that it is no friend to Canada's municipalities? More important, when will the Conservative Party stop stalling and get on with passing a budget that FCM staunchly supports? This is a budget that Canada's mayors, municipal leaders and Canadians want and deserve. Let us make it happen now.

\* \* \*

#### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the town of Okotoks, Swindells Pool, the Murray and Piper arenas, and the recycling and operations centres are all heated, cooled and lit using solar technology.

In Vulcan, residents are becoming leaders in renewable energy use. A plan to use football field sized solar panels and biomass energy would cut Vulcan's non-renewable energy use by 40% to 60% and heat homes and water.

In Willow Creek, the McBride Lake wind farm powers more than 32,500 homes annually with wind energy.

Efforts to increase slaughter capacity led to an environmentally innovative beef processing plant planned for Pincher Creek.

The 250 head per day New Generation Co-op will use bi-digesters to convert animal waste into bio-gas, killing BSE prions and other organisms in the intense heat. The bio-digester will generate electricity to operate the plant, with the excess sold to the grid creating 110 jobs locally.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

#### CANADIAN FORCES

**Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Canadian Forces Day and today is the anniversary of D-Day.

Today we have the distinct opportunity to recognize and thank the men and women in uniform and their families for the tremendous sacrifices they make on our behalf.

Today in Parliament we have 12 of those forces members, accompanied by Canada's dynamic chief of the defence staff, General Rick Hillier. They are Lieutenant Kabesh, Master Seaman Mackintosh, Leading Seaman MacDonald, Corporal Byne, Lieutenant Earl, Corporal Leclerc, Captain Selhi, Corporal Selig, Master Corporal O'Leary, Corporal Escobar, Captain Parker and Master Seaman Vallée. These members and the soldiers, sailors and air personnel they represent are our finest ambassadors. They serve our country with great dignity and courage.

On behalf of all Canadians, I give my profound thanks and gratitude to all of them for the service they give to our great nation with courage and dignity.

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#### ARTS AND CULTURE

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to invite you to Winnipeg to witness a musical happening

that is so spectacular it defies all description. You will have to come soon because the musical *Strike!* ends its world premier run on June 14 at Rainbow Stage in north Winnipeg.

This is the story of the 1919 Winnipeg general strike set to words and music, using song and dance, all an original score by Winnipeg producer Danny Schur and performed by a most excellent cast, all with Winnipeg roots and all union members. This is a performance that delights the senses, feeds the soul and stimulates civic discourse. It is about the power of collective action to make the world a better place. As Karen Toole said:

It...is about how racism restricts us all to stereotypes and denies the fullness of our humanity. It...is about how some people come to presume privilege while others end up trapped in that world of day after day repetition of labour that leads nowhere except into fear and despair.

Congratulations to dream weaver Danny Schur, the entire cast and all sponsors.

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#### ASTRONOMY

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the progress made by astronomers in this country. A recent article in *The New York Times* applauded Canadian astronomers for delivering "the most scientific bang for the buck". Such praise is generated as a result of Canada's growing stance on the international stage in the field of astronomy. This is witnessed by the fact that Canadian research is cited in scientific papers at a more frequent rate than that of any other country.

I call on the government to act on the recommendations from many groups, like the Canadian Coalition for Astronomy, to establish a single authority or single window to review big science projects like the long range plan for astronomy. A simplified application and review process would enable our researchers to continue to excel rather than devote precious lab time to paperwork.

We are extremely fortunate in Canada to have researchers and scientists of this calibre in this field. We have indeed travelled far.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### BERNARD LANDRY

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, one of the great architects of the Parti Québécois has just stepped down from political activity.

Thanks to his determination, Quebec has the political tools to carry us into the future. His unshakeable faith in the ability of the Quebec nation to govern itself and his unconditional attachment to Quebecers have made him a fierce proponent of sovereignty for our country, Quebec.

He fought in every battle of the past 40 years. An activist, a responsible statesman, and great democrat, Bernard Landry has plowed the fields and sowed the seeds of our future. He has laid the foundation that will lead Quebec to national independence and one day the people of Quebec will reap the benefits.

The members of the Bloc Québécois wish this great citizen and his wife a long and peaceful retirement and sincerely hope they will continue to support the people of Quebec along the path to its destiny.

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•(1415)

[English]

### CHINA

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians remember the brutal events of 16 years ago when Chinese authorities attacked students and protesters gathering in Tiananmen Square. Using tanks and deadly force, the Communist Party of China crushed the pro-democracy demonstration. Thousands of Chinese citizens were killed, and many more were detained in connection with the protest.

Even today there are as many as 250 people who remain unjustly imprisoned for Tiananmen related activities. The government of China refuses to acknowledge these crimes and continues to deny the Chinese people basic human rights. The people of China are denied the rights of free expression and thought, the rights of assembly and association and the right to worship freely.

Canadians condemn the continued repression in China and call on the government of China to immediately end restrictions on political and religious freedoms.

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### MEMBER FOR LABRADOR

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 24 the electors in the riding of Labrador went to the polls in a byelection and the results were clear. With a solid majority, Labrador renewed its trust in the government and put its trust in the young man who today officially takes office as the member of Parliament for Labrador.

The new member for Labrador, while the newest and one of the youngest members of the House, already has an impressive record of public service. For 10 years he was president of the Labrador Métis nation. More recent, he served as co-chair of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. Above all, he has always been a strong advocate, not only for the LMN but for all who call Labrador home.

My colleagues and I look forward to working with the member for Labrador in the coming months and years to continue the government's initiatives on behalf of the people of Labrador. We welcome him to the House and look forward to seeing him in Labrador, at his invitation, in the very near future.

### Oral Questions

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### NEW MEMBER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of the following member:

Mr. Todd Norman Russell, for the electoral district of Labrador.

\* \* \*

### NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Todd Norman Russell, member for the electoral district of Labrador, introduced by the Right Hon. Paul Martin and the Hon. Claudette Bradshaw.

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### INQUIRY BY ETHICS COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker:** Before question period begins, I would like to make a brief statement.

On Friday, June 3, I received a letter from Mr. Bernard Shapiro, the Ethics Commissioner, informing me that he is, at the request of a member of Parliament, undertaking an inquiry that will deal with alleged breaches of conduct that include the inducements allegedly sought or offered between the member for Newton—North Delta and the Minister of Health and the surreptitious taping of conversations and the alleged entrapment by the member for Newton—North Delta.

The commissioner went on to call to my attention sections 27 to 29 of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons which stands as an appendix to our Standing Orders, notably subsection 27(5), which reads as follows:

•(1420)

[Translation]

Once a request for an inquiry has been made to the Ethics Commissioner, members should respect the process established by this Code and permit it to take place without commenting further on the matter.

[English]

All House leaders were advised of this on June 3.

Before question period begins today, I wish to advise all members that I will be enforcing the Code of Conflict provisions that the House has adopted for itself with respect to both questions and answers. I ask for the cooperation of all hon. members in this matter.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, David Stewart Patterson, vice-president of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, is critical of the government's budget deal with the NDP, stating, "it is nothing more than a postdated blank cheque that would give the cabinet blanket authority over a \$4.5 billion slush fund".

*Oral Questions*

With over \$26 billion in unbridled spending announcements, there seems to be money for everything except tax relief.

The Prime Minister's do anything, say anything, cling to power strategy will hurt Canada's competitiveness in the global market. The Prime Minister has cleverly sent his own tax bills offshore.

Having bought members of Parliament votes, when will he stop trying to buy Canadian voters with their own money and give them meaningful tax relief?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was the Prime Minister, when he was the minister of finance, who introduced over \$100 billion worth of tax reduction for Canadians.

In every budget since we balanced the books in 1997, the government has reduced the tax burden on Canadians. We have steadily moved down that burden in order to increase the competitiveness and the productivity of the Canadian economy, and we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Just ask Canadians if they think they are getting a fair tax deal, Mr. Speaker.

The limp deal-making Prime Minister promised the NDP to increase government spending in exchange for support for his corrupt government. Now the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is criticizing his recklessness with the finances of the nation. The chamber says, "The government has done a complete flip-flop. Despite the importance of having a competitive tax structure...the government's focus has turned away from tax reform".

Like so many of his previous red book reversals, why has the Prime Minister again abandoned his commitment to future tax relief for Canadians to preserve his own political future?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, even with the revisions proposed with respect to Bill C-48, there remains over \$7 billion worth of tax reductions in Bill C-43, particularly aimed at lower and middle income Canadians.

I would point out that Bill C-48 itself calls for the government to avoid a deficit. It calls for the federal budget to be in surplus. It calls for \$2 billion per year to be applied on debt paydown. That is all consistent with the fundamental principles of fiscal responsibility.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is having nightmares about the Prime Minister's excessive spending. Its president, Catherine Swift, said, "Such irresponsible pre-election spending is a blatant breach of the commitment on financial prudence."

Why has the Prime Minister engaged in this bout of reckless spending that could result in a significant tax increase for Canadians?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the difference in spending that is contemplated in Bill C-48 works out to about a 1% difference in profile. That spending is devoted toward more affordable housing, toward more post-secondary education, toward a cleaner environment and toward enhanced foreign aid. All those things are in perfect sync with what Canadians want.

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if it was in perfect sync that would be great, but it looks like it is going down the toilet.

I know the Prime Minister is a shipping magnate, but that does not give him a right to spend like a drunken sailor. In fact, even the Prime Minister's favourite magazine, *The Economist*, says that he has thrown caution to the wind. Another business leader has reminded the Prime Minister that "Gimme, gimme, gimme does not count as a national economic strategy".

Will the Prime Minister withdraw from his deal with the NDP before he staggers off the gangplank?

• (1425)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of staggering, I wonder if the hon. gentleman will tell us just exactly why he opposes funding for affordable housing? Why does he oppose funding for post-secondary education and learning? Why does he oppose funding for urban transit and a cleaner environment? Why does he oppose funding for foreign aid after his leader wrote a letter demanding it?

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what is staggering is the hypocrisy of the minister. He is the one who said to the NDP that he could not afford to give those things. If they were so great, why were they not in the original budget?

All of this back of the napkin spending paves the way to waste, corruption and spending that will not get any results. When will the Prime Minister put prudence ahead of politics and tell the NDP to take a hike before he has to hike taxes to pay for everything?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the incredible flipping and flopping of the opposition is what created the controversy around Bill C-43.

I would point out to the hon. member that an arrangement was possible to invest more in housing, post-secondary education, the environment and foreign aid because we had the precondition that there would be no deficit, that the budget would be balanced, that we would run surpluses, and that we would pay down the debt at the rate of at least \$2 billion per year.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**AUDIOTAPED CONVERSATIONS**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the Prime Minister's chief of staff, whose conversations are not subject to the Ethics Commissioners' inquiry, negotiated at length with the member for Newton—North Delta and that a criminal offence may possibly have been committed during those negotiations.

## Oral Questions

On June 2 in this House, the Deputy Prime Minister answered as follows: “It is quite clear that the only thing the Prime Minister knew was that in fact the member for Newton—North Delta had approached our side of the House, interested in leaving the official opposition.”

Did the Prime Minister also know that a criminal offence might have been committed during the negotiating back and forth between his chief of staff and the member for Newton—North Delta?

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I believe we ought to follow the recommendation read by the Speaker of the House concerning the request from the Ethics Commissioner.

All I can tell you is that, according to the experts who have examined these tapes, we are dealing with altered tapes. Their credibility, along with that of the member for Newton—North Delta, is open to question.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we did in fact consult the Speaker of the House as to whether we could ask questions about Mr. Murphy. For the Prime Minister's information, the answer was yes.

My question is, therefore, justified and I will ask it again. Did Mr. Murphy notify the Prime Minister that a criminal offence had been committed? Mr. Murphy's line of defence in support of the fact that there was apparently no actual offer was that the member had approached them about selling his vote. That is his line of defence.

Was the Prime Minister informed by Mr. Murphy that an MP wanted to sell his vote? That is the question. I have the right to ask it and he has the duty to answer it.

[English]

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is basing his questions on tapes that have been proven by many audio experts to have been manipulated. Mr. Jack Mitchell, the forensic sound expert hired by the *Globe and Mail*, said:

These tapes have been edited. This is not a maybe. This is not something that's unexplained. This is not, “Oh, this is odd”. This is a definitive statement. The tapes have been edited.

That is what the hon. member is basing his questions on, on tapes that have in fact been edited as has been stated by experts.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is based on these same tapes that Tim Murphy contends he made no offer, but that requests were made, which is an offence under the law. That is Mr. Murphy's version. The Deputy Prime Minister responded last Thursday that Mr. Murphy had never told the Prime Minister there were requests constituting a criminal offence.

I would ask the Prime Minister whether what the Deputy Prime Minister told me is true, that is, that Mr. Murphy never informed him? Let him answer me. It is his duty.

● (1430)

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me clarify for the hon. leader of the Bloc Québécois what I said. I said the Prime Minister was aware that the member in question was interested in crossing the floor. The Prime Minister at that point made it absolutely clear that no offer was to be made.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, they are pretending to not understand. What I am saying is very clear. The Deputy Prime Minister says no offers were made. That is not the question.

Mr. Murphy said that there were requests to sell the MP's vote, which is a criminal offence. That is the version of Mr. Murphy, who is the Prime Minister's chief of staff. His principal adviser.

The Prime Minister has a duty to inform this House whether his chief of staff in fact informed him that a criminal offence was being committed. The question is clear. Let him answer it.

[English]

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear. He was aware that the member had said that he wanted to cross the floor. The member did not cross the floor, as we can see. The Prime Minister gave his chief of staff one instruction and that was to not make any offers. Frankly, if the hon. member has any information that he would like to provide to the RCMP then he should do exactly that.

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly have every intention of respecting your ruling, but I wonder why it is possible to do indirectly what is forbidden to do directly.

We have all been back in our ridings and we have all learned the extent to which these conversations have brought the whole place into disrepute. I want to ask the Prime Minister, who has said he also intends to respect your ruling, whether or not he thinks it would not be good for everyone, for the whole place, and everyone associated with this to step aside until the Ethics Commissioner has done his work?

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about tapes that have been edited. We are talking about tapes that have been altered. The answer to the hon. member's question is no.

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it does not really matter who initiated the conversation and whether the tapes have been altered. It is a question of due process now that we have a problem.

It seems to me that we all have a problem here. The Minister of Health and the Prime Minister could do democracy a favour in this country and its image by simply doing what many cabinet ministers have done in the past, not doing anything incriminating just stepping aside until the process has completed itself. Why can that not happen?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** I repeat the answer, Mr. Speaker. The tapes have been altered. The answer to the hon. member's question is no.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, business groups from across Canada have criticized the government's direction on fiscal policy.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Council Chief Executives, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business have all criticized the Liberal Party's spending extravaganza. All of these well-respected business groups warn that the government's actions are threatening our future economic growth and our standard of living.

Why have the concerns of these groups been ignored? Why have tax cuts for Canadians been thrown out the window in favour of the Liberal government's spending spree?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the tax reductions for individual Canadians continue to be a part of Bill C-43. In terms of two particular tax reductions with respect to corporations, they will be proceeded with by means of separate legislation.

I point out to the hon. gentleman that Canada has now the best fiscal record of any country in the G-7. We have accumulated over the last eight years the best fiscal performance of any Canadian government since 1867. That will continue to be the government's approach.

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the finance minister that those tax cuts amount to about \$16 per Canadian.

The Prime Minister is growing more and more reckless with taxpayers' money. The voice of small businesses across Canada, the CFIB, has called the Prime Minister's spending nightmarish and irresponsible. The Canadian Council of Chief Executives stated last week, "Gimme, gimme, gimme does not qualify as a national economic strategy".

Why is the Prime Minister ignoring the concerns of large and small businesses across the country? Why will he not admit that he has overspent this country for the next five years and overpledged and overpromised?

• (1435)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those very same groups have from time to time made a number of other representations. They have called for no deficit. That is the policy of the government. They have called for a continued paying down of debt. That is the policy of the government. They have called for support for things that will improve the competitiveness and the productivity of the country such as more investment in post-secondary education, and that too is the policy of the government.

[Translation]

**CHILD CARE**

**Ms. Rona Ambrose (Edmonton—Spruce Grove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his friends have developed the annoying habit of meddling to the tune of billions of dollars in areas under provincial jurisdiction.

Now that the Prime Minister has taken over child care in Canada, could he tell us what he intends to do to resolve the labour disputes Quebec families are facing?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are working with the provinces to address the social problems we face at the moment across the country. The proof of this is that my colleague, the Minister of Social Development, has signed agreements with a number of provinces and is in discussion with others, including the Province of Quebec.

[English]

**Ms. Rona Ambrose (Edmonton—Spruce Grove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Development has embarked upon a path contrary to the request from the provinces, contrary to the desire of parents, and contrary to the established governing procedure. In fact, this past weekend the minister went so far as to say that institutionalized day care "is the way in which our kids live".

I would urge the minister to expand this narrow vision and realize that not one of our nation's children should be left behind. Will the minister finally stand and admit that parents want choice in child care, and convert this two tier program into a universal program for every family, every parent and every child?

**Hon. Ken Dryden (Minister of Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member likes to talk about reflecting her peer group, urban professional women. It would be useful to go beyond one's perspective, walk a mile in somebody else's shoes, and realize that the great majority of people do not have university degrees. The great majority of people do not have professional degrees.

The great majority of people do not have a choice in terms of working or not working, and in that regard, they do not have a choice in terms of child care. The only choice that we can give them is something that is affordable and—

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AUDIOTAPED CONVERSATIONS**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's chief of staff uses the tape to support his comment that a reward was requested by an MP to cross the floor of the House. This sort of thing constitutes a criminal act.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Normally, when an officer as important as the Prime Minister's chief of staff is aware that a criminal act is being committed, he informs the Prime Minister.

*Oral Questions*

Was the Prime Minister informed by his chief of staff that a criminal act—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is basing his question on tapes that have been proven by many audio experts to have been manipulated. I can quote from many. John Doohar, a forensic audio engineer hired by the CBC, said:

This sounds to me, not only that this is an edit, but an edit done with something very crude.

The hon. member is asking that people step aside based on a tape that has been altered, which is very clear from the information that has been provided. I would ask the hon. member that if he does have information that he wishes to provide, that he provide that information to the RCMP if he believes an investigation is required and the RCMP will decide.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is getting ridiculous. The Prime Minister's chief of staff based his remarks on the same tape when he said that a request was made by the member of Parliament and that no offer was made by the government.

If we believe the Prime Minister's chief of staff, who is basing his claim on the tape, should we not, based on that same tape, admit that this was a criminal act? The chief of staff himself said a criminal act was being committed. Did the Prime Minister's chief of staff inform the Prime Minister that a criminal act was being committed?

• (1440)

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, if the hon. member believes that he has information that should be relayed to the RCMP, the RCMP will decide whether an investigation is required. Other than that, I can only point to the fact that there are numerous audio experts, such as Randy Dash, an Algonquin College professor and sound engineer, who said:

It appears that, on one of the recordings, an edit could have been done. It sounds like an audio edit. I'm saying that based on the millions of audio edits I've done.

Mike Murphy said:

—definitely an obvious edit here. It cuts off in mid-sentence.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, as soon as we learned there was a potential criminal offence, as soon as we heard the remarks on television, we communicated with the RCMP.

My question for the Prime Minister is quite simple. I give Tim Murphy the benefit of the doubt. I am saying that Mr. Murphy must have told the truth and that no offer was made. However, he claims to have received a request from an MP wanting to sell his vote. That is the version given by his chief of staff. I am not making it up; this is his defence.

I am simply asking the Prime Minister the following question, and it is his duty to respond. Did Mr. Murphy inform him that an MP wanted to sell his vote, warning him that this was a criminal offence? Did he tell him—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that in the question the hon. member actually said he had called the RCMP and asked it to conduct an investigation. I would also suggest that if he has already done so, he should wait and see whether the RCMP does in fact launch an investigation.

If he has any further information to provide the RCMP, he should do exactly that. He felt confident enough to ask the RCMP to investigate, so now if he has any further information I would certainly invite him to provide it to the RCMP so that the RCMP can decide whether there is a basis on which to conduct an investigation or not.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am simply asking the Prime Minister to confirm what the Deputy Prime Minister has said, in other words that the Prime Minister knew simply that no offer had been made and that an MP wanted to cross the floor. When I asked her if Mr. Murphy had informed the Prime Minister that requests had been made, which constitutes an offence, she said no.

Can the Prime Minister confirm this? Otherwise, we are led to believe that he may have acted with his chief of staff and that he allowed the commission of a criminal offence. That is what we are led to believe.

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister was aware of was that the member had said he had wanted to cross the floor. The member did not cross the floor. The Prime Minister gave his chief of staff one instruction: to not make any offers.

There are serious questions being raised about the authenticity of the tapes and whether they were manipulated. I do not know why the hon. member cannot take yes for an answer. He can provide the information to the RCMP. He can pursue any further information with the RCMP. The RCMP will ultimately decide whether an investigation is actually warranted.

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#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Gordon O'Connor (Carleton—Mississippi Mills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's fixed wing search and rescue fleet is so old that it is available only about 50% of the time. The government confidently publicized that the search and rescue project would be contracted by July 2005 and first deliveries would occur by February 2006, but the promised fast track for the project is not happening. In fact, it is two years behind schedule.

### Oral Questions

With the search and rescue aircraft capability deteriorating and procurements taking years to be delivered, what is the government doing to guarantee this vital service to Canadians?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this is a project that will cost the taxpayers of this country approximately \$1.3 billion. We are making sure that when the tenders go out they are correct and that we will get the best product for search and rescue in the country.

This is an excellent project. I look forward to it concluding shortly when we will be able to get our tenders out. I know that we will get the best equipment possible to make sure that our armed forces will be able to respond to emergencies in this country, as they have honourably and successfully done in the past.

**Mr. Gordon O'Connor (Carleton—Mississippi Mills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the delay of this project is another indication of a failed procurement system. The government takes years to decide whether it wants something, years to decide what it wants, and years to decide who will provide the product or service it seeks. This endless waste and indecision cost Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars each year and contribute to the ongoing capability decay of the Canadian Forces.

The search and rescue requirement is well known. There are only two competitors. Why has the government been unable to meet its own schedule?

• (1445)

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, there are billions of dollars in procurement money in the budget, which his party refuses to participate in adopting so that we can get the necessary documents through the House to give the money to the armed forces that it will need to proceed.

I ask him to participate with us. Let us get together and solve these procurement policies together instead of retreating into these little games that you are playing to destroy the possibilities for the budget for this country.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of course will want to address his remarks to the Chair.

The hon. member for Oxford.

\* \* \*

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Minister of National Defence have stated that Canadian Forces veterans exposed to agent orange qualify for disability pensions if they can make a medical case.

These ministers miss the point. Most veterans have no idea that they were exposed to agent orange and that their illnesses are related to their military service. Can the Minister of National Defence explain to the House why he has done nothing to reach out and help those exposed to agent orange at CFB Gagetown?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I totally reject the suggestion of the hon. member that the department is doing nothing to help those who have been exposed to agent orange. We regard this as a very serious matter. We are

working with everybody we can in the Canadian Forces who has been exposed to this. This happened over 45 years ago.

I know that the hon. member and other members in the House want to make sure that the department is spending its money in ways that are responsible. We are doing that. We will help to make sure that anybody affected by this matter in our forces is properly compensated and will work with them to do it.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, many veterans have no idea that they were exposed to agent orange and that their health conditions may be related to military service. Canada's veterans affairs and national defence websites do not even mention the words "agent orange". On the other hand, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has been assisting its vets for decades with a website filled with information.

Why has the government continued to fail to assist our Canadian Forces personnel and civilians who were unknowingly exposed to this toxic substance?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is outrageous to try to make a comparison between the United States, when agent orange was used regularly in Vietnam and its soldiers were exposed to this regularly, and what happened in Gagetown, where agent orange was used as a herbicide.

I assure the hon. members of this House that this happened over 40 years ago. We will work with the members of our armed forces to make sure that every single person who has been exposed to agent orange and for which we can trace a problem from the agent orange will be compensated. We have to do it properly. We have to do it in a way that is responsible. That is exactly what we will do.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, St. John's, Newfoundland played host to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities annual conference this weekend, where municipal officials gathered to discuss their policies and priorities.

The new deal is one of those priorities because it means new funding for municipalities: \$5 billion in gas tax revenue, \$800 million in public transit and \$1.6 billion for affordable housing. The mayors of Canada's 22 largest cities have called on Parliament to pass the budget. The new deal means building new partnerships. Would the Minister of State for Infrastructure and Communities please inform the House of what this relationship means in terms of achieving other governmental priorities?

**Hon. John Godfrey (Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is entirely right. The new deal is about working with cities and communities as partners while of course respecting the jurisdictions of provinces. This spirit of collaboration has led to the signing of three excellent gas tax deals with British Columbia, Alberta and Yukon.

*Oral Questions*

Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition does not share our position. In his speech to the conference over the weekend, he referred to municipalities as “stakeholders”. That is not good enough. Let me quote the mayor of Vancouver who said, “We’ve been fighting to be recognized as a partner at the table, and stakeholder is not going to cut it”.

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**TAXATION**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a former Supreme Court justice revealed the government has pocketed over \$2 million from the compensation fund for victims who contracted HIV from tainted blood. While victims are waiting to access the funds, the government is taxing any income from the fund. This is plain meanspirited.

Will the fund be tax exempt? Will the \$2 million taken from the fund be returned? Or will the health minister continue to victimize these people?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this issue was raised with the Department of Finance in 2002. The minister at the time carefully considered the representations and Mr. Manley declined to make an exception to the normal rules. The trust has asked the department to look at the issue once again and we will do that.

I would point out, though, that the original amount settled in the trust is not being taxed. The principal is not taxed. It is tax exempt. The issue here is whether or not taxation applies to the investment income or the growth in the fund, and we will look at that question.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

**FISHERIES**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, people are dying while they wait for a more straightforward answer on this.

How about another topic? In 1992 Canada banned the toxic malachite green. In February, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency found malachite green in farmed salmon. Our health regulations can only protect us if they are actually enforced. Where is the zero tolerance for this dangerous chemical and why are fish hatcheries still using it?

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this particular case the agent was in fact detected and a recall was issued.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it took years for moneys to be set aside for those infected with HIV through tainted blood. Now a former Supreme Court judge has revealed that the Liberals are taxing the Red Cross trust fund that was designed to give compensation to the victims.

The government has long known about this. Why is the government siphoning money from HIV victims?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the original amount that was set aside in this private trust is not being taxed. The only issue here is with respect to the new investment income earned on that original amount, and that amount has grown due to the length of time that it has actually taken the Red Cross to settle this trust.

The issue is whether or not there should be an exception made contrary to the rules that apply to every other private trust. The representations have been made and it is under consideration.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only thing consistent is that the government messes up anything that deals with compensation for victims.

The government is making money off HIV victims. The compensation fund established to ease their suffering is taxed by the government. So far, over \$2 million has been taken. Will the government return the money it has pocketed from HIV victims?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government is very concerned about the position of all victims of unfortunate circumstances.

This particular issue relates to the victims of HIV-AIDS as well as hep C, but there are victims of other very unfortunate circumstances who, according to the normal rules of taxation, would find the investment income in a taxable position. We are looking for a fair and equitable solution that treats everyone with the proper respect.

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**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all knew that the Liberals made taxpayers pay millions in rent for a vacant building, but last week the public works minister admitted that the \$100 million deal violated the Parliament act.

The violation carries a fine of \$200 a day for the offending party, for a total of over \$100,000 in fines. When will the government force its Liberal friend to pay up these fines to taxpayers?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we became aware of this situation, in fact, our department wrote to the company. The letter said specifically:

We would like to know...what arrangements...you have taken to ensure that you are in compliance with the Lease...Please inform us...of what corrective measures you have taken to arrange your affairs in such a way that you are not in breach of section 25.10 of the Lease.

Further, section 25 refers to section 14 of the Parliament of Canada Act. Section 14 has been repealed and in fact there is a new code of conduct for senators. If the hon. member has any complaint to make in terms of a senator's code of conduct, he ought to contact the ethics commissioner in the Senate.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Is that not handy, Mr. Speaker? After the Liberals got caught breaking the law, they merely cancelled the law. Only days after, section 14 of the Parliament of Canada Act—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I do not think the hon. member said anything that was out of order. He did not say that a member of the House had broken the law.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** He did not say that either, but the hon. member might watch his code; he must avoid creating a disturbance in the House. I would invite him to continue with his question.

• (1455)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, after the Liberals got caught breaking the law, they used a loophole to cancel the law. Handy, is it not? Only days before section 14 of the Parliament of Canada Act forced them to stop paying rent to the Liberal-tied company, the Liberal cabinet just cancelled section 14, meaning that taxpayers will continue to pay big bucks.

Is it not true that the Liberal cabinet gave a \$500,000 escape hatch to its Liberal friend with cancelling this law?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is an outrageous statement and the fact is—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services has the floor. I cannot hear a word he is saying.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that there is a new Senate code of conduct and section 14 has been repealed and supported by the Senate of Canada.

If the hon. member has a complaint or suspicion about the conduct of one of the senators, I would suggest he speak to some of his Senate colleagues who can make the complaint to the Ethics Commissioner on the floor of the House of Commons, many of whom support the new code of conduct and believe it is the appropriate way to deal with any of these types of issues in the Senate.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**MAHER ARAR INQUIRY**

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last week, we learned that the U.S. had proposed to Canadian authorities that Maher Arar be returned to Canada, but that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, said no.

How could the government say no and refuse to ensure the safety and protection of a Canadian?

[*English*]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, we will not comment on the daily testimony that is proffered before the Arar inquiry.

Mr. Justice O'Connor was put in place as an independent judge to determine the facts in relation to any Canadian involvement in the deportation of Mr. Arar from the United States to Syria. I think what is required is for Mr. Justice O'Connor to hear the evidence, hear the witnesses and make those factual determinations.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am beginning to think the government is creating commissions of inquiry in order to avoid answering questions.

This decision, both thoughtless and deplorable, resulted in Maher Arar's ending up in Syria and being tortured.

How could the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness allow CSIS to go over the head of a minister in making decisions?

[*English*]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we want to get to the bottom of this. We want to know what the facts are in terms of any Canadian officials and their involvement in any way in relation to the deportation of Mr. Arar from the United States of America to Syria.

We put the Arar inquiry in place to get to the bottom of what happened and I think we should all await Mr. Justice O'Connor's factual findings.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last year an official from Revenue Canada threatened a Catholic bishop with the loss of his church's charitable status on the basis of his support for traditional marriage.

Not only has the Prime Minister failed to protect religious freedom in the country but it appears his government is actually attacking it.

Will the Prime Minister commit to amending the same sex marriage legislation to specifically protect the charitable status of those organizations that support traditional marriage, or will he break his word again?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the matter is now before the committee. We indicated with respect to our responses that we are open to any recommendations that will be consistent with the principles of the legislation and will be supportive of the rights in the charter.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister broke his word to one of his former members. I have no confidence that he will do anything in respect to this issue.

Speaking out on social issues is a fundamental right for all Canadians. Church officials should have the same right and yet church officials have been threatened. Now Liberal members of Parliament want Christian organizations investigated by Revenue Canada for voicing their concerns on same sex marriage.

Why does the Prime Minister say he protects certain rights and denies other rights?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we respect all rights: equality rights, freedom of religion and I reject the premise of the question.

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• (1500)

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the week of June 5 to 11 is Canadian environment week. Could the minister describe for us, at the start of environment week, three recent measures testifying to the government's determination to improve the environment in Canada, in the wake of the greenest budget since Confederation?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the three measures are as follows. First, Bill C-15, on protecting migratory birds, is now law in this country. I want to thank all the members of this House for voting unanimously for the bill.

Second, the Minister of State for Infrastructure and Communities invested \$800 million to improve public transit systems in Canada.

Third, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services announced this morning the establishment of the Office of Greening Government Operations, which aims to protect nature, quality of life in our cities and the role of the Government of Canada in the environment.

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**PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA**

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the government thinks that public servants should be paid more, then it should be transparent about it and increase their basic salary instead of giving them a year-end bonus. Canadians do not believe that 9 out of 10 senior managers deserve such a generous bonus.

The government has already wasted billions of dollars on the gun registry and the sponsorship scandal. How can it justify paying any more money to those who supervised these fiascos?

[English]

**Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we can support these people because 457,000 of them do valuable work right across the country and they act ethically and honourably. Frankly, at the higher levels, by every independent study, they are underpaid and deserve to be paid more, not less. I do not know why the opposition continues to make this false attack on the leadership of the Public Service of Canada.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last year 91% of all senior public service executives received bonuses totalling over \$32 million. I believe public servants at all levels should have the opportunity to earn bonuses for exceptional performance but when extra pay becomes routine it is no longer a bonus. It is just more unaccountable spending by an irresponsible government.

Will the President of the Treasury Board explain to overtaxed Canadians why the government arbitrarily takes money from their paycheques and adds it to the paycheques of senior public servants?

**Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I will do is correct the misinformation that the opposition puts on the record every year on this. Only 37% of executives received bonuses this year. There is an at risk pay portion designed by an independent committee and headed by a professor at the University of Western Ontario who recognizes that our quality of life is based upon the very good work that these people do and they deserve to be paid.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last week, Bombardier Transportation announced that it was considering moving some of the activities of its La Pocatière plant to Mexico to ensure getting contracts. This move would result in the loss of 300 well-paying jobs in my riding.

Does the government, which announced hundreds of millions of dollars to help the automobile and aerospace industry, intend to present a real action plan to help the public transit industry remain competitive?

[English]

**Hon. David Emerson (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, programs are available to work with public transit manufacturing organizations. Bombardier itself has a very serious line of business in producing rapid transit trains and vehicles. We have programs that are available to help the companies that qualify and we will certainly look at any proposal that comes forward.

\* \* \*

**AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO MAKE CERTAIN PAYMENTS**

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in a letter released over the weekend, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce accused the government of risking a deficit through Bill C-48, in spite of the government's precondition that it would not lead to deficit spending.

I wonder if there is anything else the Minister of Finance might want to share with the House in response to the Chamber of Commerce.

*Points of Order*

•(1505)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to be absolutely clear, if one reads the terms of Bill C-48, it calls for the government to avoid a deficit. It calls for the federal budget to be in surplus. It calls for \$2 billion to be applied to debt paydown both this year and next. On the issue of tax reductions, the government will proceed, albeit on separate legislative tracks.

With the greatest of respect, the Chamber of Commerce was mistaken in its analysis of Bill C-48.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** It is my pleasure today to welcome to the House of Commons the members of Team Canada who took part in the Special Olympic World Games in Nagano, Japan, from February 26 to march 5, 2005.

We are very proud of our athletes and their achievements, who have worked hard and represented Canada well.

The months of training, as well as your determination, brought you all to Nagano where you competed against other athletes. But above all, you competed against your own abilities and have pushed your limits to new levels.

[*Translation*]

Those close to you, your family, neighbours, and coaches, provided you with the constant support you needed to reach your top performance and you did not let them down.

I am sure you will always have great memories of this competition and the friendships you have begun with athletes from other countries.

[*English*]

You are an inspiration to all of us and we are honoured to have you with us today to celebrate your successes.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I am also pleased to draw to the attention of the House the presence of 12 representative members of the Canadian Forces here to take part in annual Canadian Forces Day events.

Canadian Forces Day is an opportunity for Canadians from across the country to recognize the sacrifices that our men and women in uniform make on our behalf.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## INQUIRY BY ETHICS COMMISSIONER

**Mr. Randy White (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to get further clarification of the section in your recent decision.

Further to your ruling on the taping of politicians by politicians under section 27(5) in appendix 1, I would like you to explain to the House whether or not that applies to both members in their local press and all members in ten percenters, householders, radio or any

other media outside of this House, and whether or not there are consequences for not complying after today and further disgracing this House?

**The Speaker:** I will be happy to look into the questions raised by the hon. member.

I can say off the top of my head that normally the Chair is not concerned with activities of members outside this House. I am concerned with activities inside the House. Whether it applies to any publications that the House may print on behalf of members is another matter.

As the hon. member is aware, some of those issues have been referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs which is looking into the matter at this very moment I believe.

I will be happy to get back to the member in due course if he seeks clarification on some of these points. However, as the hon. member knows, I deal with issues that come before the House not in a speculative way but based on what actually happens.

Having received this letter on Friday afternoon I took the step of sending a letter, which I summarized in a statement I gave in the House today, to the House leaders to advise them that there was some urgency in dealing with this matter and that questions concerning events that were under investigation would be improper in the House.

•(1510)

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, further to that and for clarification, as the Speaker well knows the objective of your decision is to try to apply fairness in the evaluation that will take place.

There are a lot of comments by many members outside of this House which could prejudge that situation. I know in the many years as the House leader on this side that there have been decisions that actually prevent members from influencing a review or a study that may take place. I would appreciate it if the Chair would look at that, please.

**The Speaker:** I would be happy to look at it, but I think the hon. member knows that my control over members and their activities outside of the House is somewhat limited. However, I am sure he will urge his colleagues to follow what I have no doubt will be his example in these matters and refrain from comment where it is inappropriate to make such comments.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention and to the attention of all members in the House that we have a bit of a dilemma on our hands with this inquiry.

It just so happens that if the Ethics Commissioner is to examine the taping and the tapes and all this, the dilemma is that he himself is named in those tapes. It is indicated that it is possible that people on the Liberal side in the government could perhaps influence the Ethics Commissioner to change his position or to influence a positive outcome with respect to the member for Newton—North Delta. The dilemma is very clear. The Prime Minister's chief of staff has indicated that this is a possibility. Now we have that same Ethics Commissioner, whom it is presumably possible to influence, now investigating exactly that. There is a big problem there.

*Points of Order*

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that the hon. member thinks it is a problem, but I do not know what the Speaker is supposed to do about it.

The reference has been made to the Ethics Commissioner. As members wanted, the House had set up the rules, appointed the Ethics Commissioner and set up the rules under which he would operate, including the Standing Orders I cited earlier. It is not for me to challenge the House's rules. I am here to enforce them and I am only doing it to the best of my ability.

I am sure that if the hon. member has reservations, he will make them known in the appropriate places, particularly in the procedures and House affairs committee, where I know there is interest always in the Standing Orders of the House. He can take the matter up there.

## BILL C-259—EXCISE TAX ACT

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that Bill C-259 will be before the House tomorrow. It is the projected order. There was a report submitted by the finance committee, an amended report submitted by the finance committee, and it is our respectful position that the bill, as reported by the finance committee is in fact out of order.

When the bill left the House, it dealt with one item and one item only, namely, the elimination of excise tax on jewellery. This was the only thing that was to be considered by the House and by the committee.

When the committee dealt with it, the bill came back significantly amended and the additions were to eliminate the excise tax on clocks and watches and a second addition was to eliminate the excise tax on semi-precious stones.

It is our view that this is well beyond the purview of the committee, that it is in fact out of order on the part of the committee and that a committee is limited in its recommendations to the House, either to report the bill as presented or to defeat the bill. It is not within the scope of the committee to amend the bill in such a significant fashion. Watches, for instance, are items that are separately defined in the Excise Tax Act itself. Therefore, there is a clear delineation in the excise tax between taxation on a watch and taxation on jewellery.

When the bill left the House, there was no reference to watches, clocks or semi-precious stones. When the bill comes back to House, as it will tomorrow, it will have reference, by way of amendment, to those three items of jewellery: semi-precious stones, watches and clocks.

I would solicit from you, Mr. Speaker, a ruling as to whether the bill, as presented to House, as amended by the committee, is in fact in order.

• (1515)

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of the finance committee that heard the testimony of the member for Vancouver Island North, whose private member's bill this is, there was discussion in committee about this very issue. The clerk, receiving advice from legislative counsel on the committee, agreed that the amendment was in order and should be reported back to the House.

I know the member for Vancouver Island North has received further advice from legislative counsel, and available to the members of the House, that the amendment is in order. The bill will be before the House at report stage tomorrow where the member for Vancouver Island North will speak to this very issue. I would invite you to hear him speak at that time, Mr. Speaker, so that he can clarify this further.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to try to be helpful, I also participated in the same meeting. The issue is twofold, as far as I see it. The private member's bill in the first instance sought to eliminate a subclause of a particular clause. That was the substance of the bill. The change proposed in the bill seeks to delete further subclauses under the same clause of the Excise Tax Act. That is one aspect.

The other part, which I think it would be useful to look at, is whether the decision of the legislative counsel was correct. I challenged it at the committee on the basis that it was beyond the scope of the bill. The decision was taken on the basis that we were talking about the same paragraph in the Excise Tax Act and, therefore, any item could be dealt with under that same paragraph.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, that paragraph 5 of the act, I believe, deals with a broad range of issues, certainly not all homogeneous in terms of the subject matter of the bill.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, the member for Peace River and the member for Mississauga South for their interventions in this matter. I will get back to the House, I hope on a timely basis, in respect of this.

## INQUIRY BY ETHICS COMMISSIONER

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to make some sense of the issue that was raised earlier about the investigation of the member for Newton—North Delta. My understanding, from the Speaker's comments earlier, is that the issue may not be raised in this place, but it may be raised in the lobby, or in the press or at home, that there are no restrictions.

My further understanding is that questions cannot be raised on the issue in the House, but they will be raised in private with the Ethics Commissioner, whose independence may or may not be in question.

Is that an accurate understanding of the situation as it stands?

• (1520)

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to raise an independent point of order, but I think there are a number of points of order on the floor, particularly this one, which might permit me to raise with you concerns that we had arising out of question period.

*Points of Order*

I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that I welcome your effort in trying to get the House to respect the regulations with respect to inquiries under the auspices of the Ethics Commissioner. We also feel though that there is a need for greater certainty or greater clarity, as the case may be, as to what is permissible in the House and what is not. It may be that there is a bit of a conflict between the section of the Parliament of Canada Act which established the Ethics Commissioner in the first place and the regulations. The part which you quoted to us in your advice comes from the regulations, I believe, under section 27(5), where it states:

Once a request for an inquiry has been made to the Ethics Commissioner, Members should respect the process established by this Code and permit it to take place without commenting further on the matter.

By and large that is good advice and if we had been able to adopt a similar attitude, although not by regulation but with respect to other inquiries going on, Parliament might actually pay attention to its own business from time to time instead of what is going on in other venues.

Having said that, the Parliament of Canada Act, which established the Ethics Commissioner, states under section 72.05(5):

For greater certainty, this section shall not be interpreted as limiting in any way the powers, privileges, rights and immunities of the House of Commons or its members.

Therefore, on the one hand we have the act which says that our privileges and our abilities presumably to raise questions in the House will not be limited in any way. On the other hand we have advice which advises us that we should behave in a particular way; not that we shall, but that we should. That is perhaps a critical distinction, particularly in light of what happened in question period.

I certainly was prepared not to ask a question having to do with that, Mr. Speaker, after you said what you did at the beginning of question period. However, then it followed from there that the leader of the Bloc Québécois was able to raise a question anyway in the context of the Prime Minister's chief of staff, even though when one talks about the Prime Minister's chief of staff doing whatever he was doing along with the Minister of Health, it is a little hard to separate them.

I noticed, Mr. Speaker, that you did then permit questions, perhaps out of respect for the fact that all you advised us to do was based on a should rather than a shall, I am not sure. I think greater certainty from you as to what you expect of us in this matter would be very helpful. I would ask you to consider the matter and perhaps, as soon as you feel it is possible, to come back with some further advice for us on how you wish us to conduct ourselves in respect of this investigation.

I want to make it clear that I do not think it is a bad thing for you to lay out guidelines with respect to this sort of thing. The House would be well advised to have such guidelines, but what we have so far, I would submit, is not enough and I would ask you to provide further clarification as soon as you are ready.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Delta—Richmond East and the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona for their comments, and other hon. members who earlier raised the point. I am more than happy to come back with a more detailed ruling in respect of this matter.

However, to respond promptly to the comments of the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona's about question period, if he checks the letter from the Ethics Commissioner, he makes it very clear that he is unable and has no power to carry out an investigation in respect of the Prime Minister's chief of staff. It was for that reason that I allowed questions concerning the chief of staff because he is not and cannot be subject to an investigation by the Ethics Commissioner.

I was trying to be fair to hon. members. I recognize that there is a tie-in with other people but the questions did not do that tie-in. They stuck with the one person. Therefore, I do not know how, by enforcing what in effect is a standing order of the House because the appendix is there to the standing orders, I can say that those questions are not allowed. Had the questions concerned the minister, I think I would have intervened. Had they concerned the allegations directly that dealt with the taping per se, I would have intervened. However, they did not.

That is why what happened today happened today. I was listening quite attentively to the questions.

I thank the hon. members for their remarks and I will come back to the House with further clarification that I hope will help particularly the hon. member for Delta—Richmond East with the questions he raised.

• (1525)

ADMISSIBILITY OF ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this point of order has to do with question period and the questioning by the member for Nepean—Carleton which dealt with a matter which the Speaker ruled out of order in terms of the concern about either impugning motive or attributing a wrongdoing to a member of this place or the other place. You ruled his question out of order.

The matter was raised again by the member in his questions this past Friday in *Hansard*. Although the second question was permitted, in challenge, the Speaker undertook to look at the matter since there had been evidence at a committee the prior day which in my view contradicted what the member included in his statements.

Today again we have had these questions which directly or indirectly attack the integrity of a member of the other place. There is evidence on the table, including legal letters.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that before any further questions on this matter as they relate to a member of the other place be entertained, the evidence provided to the committee be looked at and if it is found that the substance of the question the member has raised subsequently in fact contradicts information, or he actually contradicted evidence that was given, that he deliberately continued to impugn motive.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you simply to look at the evidence that was given to the member and to all members in regard to this so that there be no further questions here about the legality of any payments, et cetera, all of which directly tie into the question of integrity of a member of the other place.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only member in the House who seems to be confused about the evidence is that member over there who just spoke. In fact, this was actually reported in numerous newspapers. The Minister of Public Works conceded in committee that the law, section 14 of the Parliament of Canada Act, was in fact contravened. He furthermore actually said that the deal was not in compliance with section 14. He did this on numerous occasions.

It is all recorded. My questions were actually shared in advance with the Clerk of the House. I confirm that there were no problems whatsoever with them. They fall within all the rules.

Finally, this matter is very important. The member is asking you to silence debate in the House on a \$100 million deal. He has called on you to do that, Mr. Speaker. That is a serious attack on our democratic right to speak in the House and to criticize the operations of the Government of Canada.

I would ask that you stand in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, and do what you know to be right, which is to wholeheartedly renounce any attempt by a government member to silence debate on what is a very important issue of corruption in the Liberal Party and in that government.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton knows that I clarified at committee last week that in fact our department took action and communicated with Alexis Nihon in written form through a letter that actually asks that the firm demonstrate its compliance with section 25.10 of the lease. That section refers to section 14 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

The hon. member knows that is what I said. That is different from what he is inferring. In fact, the hon. member ought to also be aware, because we told him at committee that section 14 has been repealed. There is a new Senate code of conduct supported in fact by many of the Conservative members of the Senate.

If he has a complaint as to the conduct of a member of the other place, he ought to speak to the House leadership of the Conservative Party within the Senate and perhaps they can advance that complaint to the ethics commissioner in the Senate. That is up to him. I would be interested to see the response of the Conservative leadership in the Senate on this kind of question.

• (1530)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, in fact the Minister of Public Works was very explicit when he said that this deal was “not in compliance with section 14 of the Parliament of Canada Act”. Those records are very clear. They are caught on audiotape by the House of Commons. He cannot deny that.

**The Speaker:** Order. I think I have heard enough on this point.

There seems to be a dispute. I would advise that the hon. Minister of Public Works and the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton might want to sit down with the hon. member for Mississauga South and go through the committee transcript and read what it says and get all the words right and see if there is agreement on this. That might be easier.

The Speaker sitting here during question period is not supposed to know everything that happened in a committee and what was said here and what was said there and then figure out that the question relates to this or that.

I listened to the question as it was put in the House. I did not think the question contravened the Standing Orders. How the Speaker is to divine that the question is concerning a member of the other house when it does not say so is the difficulty that I am confronted with.

I sympathize with the member for Mississauga South, but I think if the members got together and looked at the transcript and figured out what language was used, it might temper the questions and the answers in future which would make it easier for all hon. members, not just the Speaker.

I will look into the matter and if necessary, I will get back to the House. I urge hon. members to show judicious restraint in the phrasing of questions and of course answers.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour, pursuant to Section 38 of the Access to Information Act, to lay upon the Table the report of the Information Commissioner for the period of April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

\* \* \*

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (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 six petitions.

\* \* \*

### LABRADOR INUIT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT ACT

**Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-56, an act to give effect to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and the Labrador Inuit Tax Treatment Agreement.

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

\* \* \*

### BANK ACT

**Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (for the Minister of Finance)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-57, an act to amend certain acts in relation to financial institutions.

*Routine Proceedings*

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

\* \* \*

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS

**Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

[*English*]

In accordance with its order of reference of Monday, October 18, 2004, your committee considered Bill C-2, an act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children and other vulnerable persons) and the Canada Evidence Act, and agreed on Thursday, June 2, 2005 to report it with amendments.

HEALTH

**Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Health.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and a motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, June 2, your committee recommends that the government immediately ban bulk exports of prescription drugs, with the exception of those produced in Canada for export.

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND  
THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the provisions of Bill C-280, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, employment insurance account and premium rate setting, and another act in consequence.

A majority of the committee supported the need to refer the bill to the Speaker for another ruling with respect to the need for a royal recommendation.

We know the Speaker has ruled on one aspect of the bill which is designed to set up an independent EI commission. We believe that a massive transfer, \$45 billion of public funds of this type, inevitably involves a royal recommendation.

Even changing the nature of the commission has important implications. Moving the commission outside of government, changing the roles of commissioners involves expense. We are concerned about the staffing of the independent commission. Will the independent commission draw on the tens of thousands of employees at HRSD and what are the financial implications of that? We urge, Mr. Speaker, that you look at the transcripts, as I know you will, and look again at the need for a royal recommendation for this piece of legislation.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I have some very incisive comments with respect to the need for a royal recommendation. I would be happy to make them now or perhaps you would prefer to let routine proceedings finish and then I could briefly get up on a point of order at the end of routine proceedings.

**The Speaker:** Maybe we had better go ahead with routine proceedings because the incisive remarks might take a few minutes, I sense.

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of constituents in Wetaskiwin, Ma-Me-O Beach, Millet and Westeros, I am pleased under Standing Order 36 to present a petition on their behalf.

The petitioners say that marriage is the best foundation for raising children. They note that the institution is under many challenges in Canada. They also note that the institution of marriage and its definition is the exclusive jurisdiction of Canada's Parliament. The petitioners therefore pray that Parliament pass legislation to recognize the institution of marriage in federal law as being a lifelong union of one man and one woman.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by a number of Canadians, including from my own riding of Mississauga South.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that the majority of Canadians believe that fundamental matters of social policy should be decided by elected members of Parliament and not by the unelected judiciary. They remind Parliament that it is its duty to ensure that marriage is defined as Canadians wish it to be defined.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to use all possible legislative and administrative measures, including the invocation of section 33 of the charter, commonly known as the notwithstanding clause, to preserve and protect the current definition of marriage as being the legal union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

• (1540)

RURAL POST OFFICES

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions from my riding. The first one is from the community of Asquith.

The petitioners ask that the government immediately stop closing rural post offices as it had promised citizens years ago.

MARIJUANA

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition is also from my constituents.

The petitioners call on Parliament to withdraw Bill C-17 and any legislation designed to decriminalize the possession and use of marijuana, that the government provide increased funding to the RCMP and Canadian police forces to ensure the elimination of marijuana grow operations, and that the government impose a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in a federal penitentiary without parole eligibility for conviction of grow operation owners, and finance this initiative by redirecting the funding of the ineffective \$2 billion long gun registry into a program to eliminate grow ops in Canada.

#### COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAM

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in the House today and present a petition on behalf of my constituents from Hanna, Rumsey, Coronation, Gregg Mount, Delia. The petitioners call upon Parliament to refrain from ending the community access program, commonly known as CAP.

The petitioners believe that the absence of CAP would result in a step backward in the ongoing goal to improve the quality of life for Canadians. In my rural constituency this program is one that does help develop and improve the quality of life for rural Albertans.

#### MARRIAGE

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have with me six petitions, not just from my riding of Cambridge North Dumfries but also from the surrounding ridings of Guelph and Kitchener—Waterloo. These petitioners call upon Parliament to respect and uphold the current definition of marriage which is the union of one man and one woman.

#### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of the members of 17 churches, primarily the Netherlands Reformed Church. They are from across Canada including a number of churches in my riding. The petitioners call upon Parliament to restore capital punishment.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suggest that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary I think has some incisive comments he wants to make on a point of order.

\* \* \*

#### POINTS OF ORDER

##### BILL C-280—EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):**

#### Points of Order

Mr. Speaker, you will see as I briefly go through these comments exactly how incisive they are.

[Translation]

I would like to draw to your attention the two reasons why the government believes that Bill C-280 requires a royal recommendation.

My committee colleagues are currently engaged in discussing the advantages of the bill. My objective is simply to clarify the procedural and constitutional issues relating to royal recommendation.

First of all, this bill would create a new employment insurance fund and set out the amounts to be paid into it. Section 71 and subsection 72(a) of the Employment Insurance Act stipulate that the moneys paid into the EI account are part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

All of the money currently allocated to EI is virtual. When contributions are made, they become part of general revenue, and the same amount is credited to the EI account.

No amount is actually transferred to an EI account, however, which is why this is a “virtual fund”. When there is an EI expenditure, particularly for a pilot project, it is covered by general revenue and debited from the EI fund.

There is no transfer from the EI account, because there is no money in it. The actual funds are integrated with general revenue. Over time, the EI fund eventually reports some figure which represents the current balance of transactions—annual surplus or, as used to be the case, annual deficit—but this is also a virtual amount.

Section 72 would make it possible for moneys allocated to the Consolidated Revenue Fund under EI to be paid to legal entities other than Her Majesty. I would invite you, Mr. Speaker, to consult section 23 of the Human Resources Development Act.

• (1545)

[English]

This represents a potentially significant change in how these amounts are managed and disbursed. Subsection 72(2) requires the amounts in the account to be deposited with a financial institution. Subsection 72(3) provides that the commission is to manage the amounts paid into this account “in the best interests of contributors and beneficiaries” as opposed to the more general public interest. Subsection 72(3) would also require the commission to deposit the amounts with private financial institutions. Section 73 would allow these amounts to be used by Her Majesty subject to a decision of the commission to extend a loan and would be subject to the payment of interest as rates established by the commission. Currently, the commission has no role in such use and the Minister of Finance decides what, if any, interest is to be paid per section 76 of the Employment Insurance Act.

### *Government Orders*

Section 54 of the Constitution Act, 1867, provides:

It shall not be lawful for the House of Commons to adopt or pass any Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill for the Appropriation of any Part of the Public Revenue, or of any Tax or Impost, to any Purpose that has not been first recommended to that House by Message of the Governor General in the Session in which such Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill is proposed.

Section 2 of the Financial Administration Act defines the word “appropriation” as meaning “any authority of Parliament to pay money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund”.

Erskine May, at page 765 in the 22nd edition, specifies that “the following are categories of expenditure provision...which require authorization by Money resolution...” It then provides a list of items which includes at number five: “The authorization of a single payment out of the Consolidated Fund”.

The objective of Bill C-280 is clearly to ensure that the EI account is kept separate from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The payment to the new account represents “a new and distinct charge” on the public revenue that is not currently provided for under existing legislation. Clearly, the appropriation of a sum of this magnitude, which some members have estimated to be as high as \$46 billion, must require a royal recommendation.

The second reason the government believes this bill should be accompanied by a royal recommendation is that the purpose of the original appropriations would be changed by this bill. The Acting Speaker indicated on May 9, 2005, that changing the purposes for which moneys are appropriated requires a royal recommendation:

In this particular case, Bill C-312 contains some provisions which caused the Chair to pause and consider its impact on the financial initiative of the Crown. As most members know, bills which involve new or additional spending for a distinct purpose must be recommended by the Crown. The royal recommendation is also required where a bill alters the appropriation of public revenue “under the circumstances, in the manner and for the purposes set out” in the bill. What this means is that a royal recommendation is required not only in the case where more money is being appropriated, but also in the case where the authorization to spend for a specific purpose is being significantly altered.

Amendments concerning the Canada Employment Insurance Commission's structure and responsibilities would change the purpose for which money allocated to run the commission would be used. The commission would be assigned new responsibilities for independently managing and investing as much as potentially \$46 billion in funds but at least \$15 billion, as well as providing independent recommendations for policy and legislative changes to the employment insurance program.

●(1550)

In addition, the purpose of the funds collected and granted under the existing Employment Insurance Act would be altered, since that act clearly did not provide for the investment of these assets as required by subsection 72(3)(b). These are clearly new purposes both for the money granted for the administration and operation of the commission and for the treatment of premiums currently collected under the employment insurance system.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I conclude that this bill requires a royal recommendation and I hope that you will consider these most incisive points very carefully.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of things to say on this issue. This is a fairly

comprehensive statement that the member has just made dealing with a very important and, I suggest, contentious topic. I question why such an item as this would be raised as a point of order.

It is not just a matter of moving one thing from here to somewhere else. We are talking about huge sums of money. We are talking in excess of \$40 billion. We know how much bureaucracy it takes for the government to move that kind of money. This is an extremely comprehensive piece of work and I am concerned about the mechanism of dealing with such a topic on a point of order.

**The Speaker:** I do not pretend to understand all the ramifications of the point of order. I do understand that the hon. parliamentary secretary is suggesting that a royal recommendation is required before the bill can proceed. That, it seems to me, is a point of order. Whether there is another way of doing this without requiring a royal recommendation is another argument I suppose that could be advanced, or whether this does require it.

If there are no other submissions on the question of whether a royal recommendation is in fact required, I will be glad to take the hon. parliamentary secretary's comments under advisement and return to the House in due course with a ruling on this important matter.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### FISHERIES ACT

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-52, an act to amend the Fisheries Act (terms and conditions of permissions, leases and licences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-52, a bill to amend the Fisheries Act. The amendment that the bill contains clarifies that it is a requirement of the act to comply with fishing licence terms and conditions. In particular, the amendment is designed to address a very specific issue which has been raised by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

●(1555)

[Translation]

I wish to thank the committee for its diligence. I really value its work, and I appreciate its continued interest in the Fisheries Act.

[English]

On March 15—

**The Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, but I was asleep at the switch, as they say. The hon. minister indicated that he wished to split his time. Since this is the first speech and several of these speeches require this, is there unanimous consent of the House for the hon. minister to split his time in this debate at this point?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** I am sorry to have interrupted the minister, but if he was going to do that we had to get consent. I forgot it myself and I was reminded.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has the floor.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I must admit to having forgotten that provision as well.

On March 15 of this year I received from the standing joint committee a notice of disallowance for a subsection of the Ontario fishery regulations under the Fisheries Act. The report on its concerns has now been tabled.

The committee feels that greater clarity and certainty are needed on matters of legislative authority with respect to a subsection in these regulations that requires compliance with commercial fishing licence terms and conditions.

The Government of Canada has continuously maintained that this provision of the regulations is legally sound and within the authority of the Fisheries Act. It provides an effective means to conserve and manage Ontario's fisheries.

However we do agree that greater certainty and clarity will be provided with the amendment I am proposing today. This amendment would add a new section to the Fisheries Act, a section dealing with compliance with terms and conditions of fishing licences.

We believe the amendment provides the measure of certainty and clarity needed while addressing the committee's legal concerns.

I should also point out that passage of the amendment into law will not change the existing practices on the ground. It basically moves a provision currently in regulation into the act itself.

Clearly, this issue has a number of implications for Ontario's fisheries. The success of Canada's fisheries, including those in Ontario, depends on conservation. Revoking the subsection of the Ontario fishery regulations requiring compliance with licence terms and conditions would create a legal gap in the enforcement regime that is key to the province's ability to conserve the fishery and manage it in a sustainable way.

The Province of Ontario depends on these regulations. Conservation and the orderly management of fisheries are vital components of maintaining a strong, viable fishing industry, an industry that contributes anywhere from \$250 million to \$500 million to the economies of both Ontario and Canada.

*[Translation]*

This is why Bill C-52 is so important. This bill provides the particulars and the certainty that the committee is asking for. Moreover, it will allow the province of Ontario to keep the tools that it needs to maintain orderly commercial fisheries in a sustainable way.

*[English]*

I should point out that this is an interim measure while we work toward broader Fisheries Act reform. I have indicated on many occasions that I am serious about updating the act. This 137 year old piece of legislation needs to be modernized.

Canada's fisheries have changed and evolved over the years, in some cases far beyond the current tools and practices we have in place to manage them. Our legislation should change accordingly.

On May 17, I met with the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and outlined our approach. I told its members that my department was developing a comprehensive legislative renewal package for the Fisheries Act to bring it into line with the realities of this industry in the 21st century.

As the government prepares to bring forward broad reform to the act, I have asked the standing committee to provide me with its advice. In particular, I have indicated that input in the following four areas would be very helpful: allocation, co-management, compliance and sanctions. Sanctions, of course, are points of great interest to the standing joint committee as well.

I look forward to working with Parliament, with men and women who are involved in the fishing industry across the country and with other levels of government to give Canadians the modern effective Fisheries Act they need.

In the meantime, the amendment I am tabling today will address the standing joint committee's legal concerns and ensure that the Province of Ontario has the certainty it needs as it manages and conserves its fisheries on behalf of its citizens.

That is why I am asking all members of the House to join me in supporting this important bill addressing the concerns of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations.

• (1600)

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the premise of the minister's remarks is simply incorrect. The minister suggests that the fishery would be impossible to manage if Bill C-52 were not passed.

That is simply incorrect. If the minister would look at the last couple of pages of the report of the scrutiny of regulations committee, he would find that the committee makes it quite clear that in fact it is possible to manage the fishery without the benefit Bill C-52.

In fact, until the government, the ministry and the department started using this notion of attaching conditions to a licence about 10 years ago, the fishery was quite well managed. Let me rephrase that somewhat. The ability to manage the fishery was certainly there. Whether it was well managed or not is another question when one considers the problem with the North Atlantic cod, not to mention the problems on the Fraser River over the last year.

Why would the minister suggest that it is impossible to manage the fishery when the scrutiny of regulations committee, which is the expert on regulations that are proposed by this House, makes it quite clear that it is possible to manage the fishery?

Second, why does the minister think it is appropriate that fisheries managers, the same bureaucrats who brought us the disaster on the Fraser River this past summer, be given unfettered licence to put in place conditions of licence to manage the fishery without the scrutiny of Parliament? If the minister does think that is appropriate, then he is the only person I know who would support that notion.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, first, I have had discussions with some members of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations who have indicated to me that they are very satisfied with the bill we have brought forward. They feel that it does solve the problems that they have raised. They are content with what we have done.

In fact, I think the committee has received a copy of the letter from the Ontario minister of natural resources, Mr. Ramsay, who was very concerned about this. He disagrees with my hon. colleague's arguments on this. He feels very strongly that these regulations are essential for the conservation of fish in the lakes and rivers of Ontario. He feels that it is absolutely vital that we act in this way to make sure the notice of disallowance, which has been brought forward by the standing joint committee and its members, not continue. Otherwise, we would have a situation as soon as July 19 of this year where the regulations that say people have to follow the rules of their licence would no longer exist.

I made it very clear that I am interested in finding new ways of managing the fisheries. I have said it time and again to my hon. colleagues on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. I have yet to see much interest from that member, for example, in seeing changes to the Fisheries Act. I hope I will see that interest and I hope he is interested in changing the Fisheries Act and having overall reform.

If we are going to have a modern system, not one from 10 years ago or 137 years ago, but a modern system that responds to the needs of the fishery today, we really need to have an overhaul of the Fisheries Act. As I say, I am waiting for interest from that side of the House for that to go ahead.

**Mr. John Cummins:** Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned the minister of fisheries from Ontario and suggested that he found fault with this problem and said that he could not manage the fisheries appropriately.

The scrutiny of regulations committee made it very clear that the Ontario minister did not understand section 36(2). In fact, the committee said, "The minister does not reflect a clear understanding of the nature of section 36(2)".

It is not myself who is mistaken here. It is the minister from Ontario—

• (1605)

**The Speaker:** I am not sure there was a question.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans a very brief response.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I do not expect that all members of any committee will agree with everything the provincial ministers say but I think it is an important point to recognize that the provincial minister who is responsible for administering the fishery in Ontario is very concerned about this. In fact, in a letter dated April 14, he said:

I am extremely concerned about the serious impacts on Ontario's ability to manage and ensure the conservation of fisheries should the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations (SJC) table a Report of Disallowance regarding subsection 36(2) of the Ontario Fishery Regulations.

As you know, subsection 36(2) is the offence section under which Ontario enforces terms and conditions on approximately 500 commercial food and 1400 commercial bait fishing licences. Terms and conditions are currently the only

mechanisms by which Ontario can establish allowable quota, areas where fishing can occur, designates who can take fish under a licence, reporting for commercial fishing licences. Without this provision, Ontario would literally have its hands tied with respect to enforcement of the commercial fishery.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join in the debate on this legislation.

The reason for the legislation being here was generated by members of the House and the Senate because of a disallowance report put together and tabled by the Standing Joint Committee for Scrutiny of Regulations. The ministry has responded very quickly to produce legislation which would rectify a difficulty in the existing regulations, as pointed out by the standing joint committee. This is an alleged defect. The committee is pretty sure that it is correct in this, although I am prepared to allow some difference of opinion as this thing goes on.

I have served on that committee for some 15 years. The member for Scarborough Southwest has been there for some 16 years continuously. We are relatively clear on where we are coming from on the committee. The work of the committee over all those years, and prior to when I arrived, has always been non-partisan. The committee has effectively done its work, regrettably ending up in about a half a dozen disallowance reports over the 15 years. That is not too bad. All the other hundreds of disagreements with the government have been resolved by other means.

In this case, the committee felt that it had no choice but to proceed with the disallowance.

The government, having read the report, has done everything it could to comply with the disallowance procedure now in place. In fact, two procedures are going on in tandem right now. One of them is the disallowance procedure, whereby the report, having been introduced into the House and in the Senate, will receive a debate here, probably for the first time in parliamentary history. Sometime next week or this week it is possible we will have a debate in the House under the provisions in the Standing Orders that would allow that.

Normally, these debates do not happen. Usually what happens is the government complies and revokes the impugned regulation.

In this case, the government will in all likelihood revoke the impugned regulation, but the regulation in this context has to be replaced by a statutory provision. If there is no statutory provision, it is questionable whether the enforcement of the federal fishery in the Province of Ontario can continue.

The Ontario minister has flagged his concern at the likely disappearance of the regulation and the need for a statutory provision. The statutory provision, the one line in this bill, effectively creates an analogous provision to what was in the regulation.

*Government Orders*

Why did we have to make that change? Why was that regulation put under disallowance procedure? The reason is it is arguable that regulation creates an offence which is punishable in law. The committee, in its traditions going back a quarter century, says that regulations cannot create offences unless the House, through a statute, allows that to happen. Therefore, the bill would put into statutory form the offence creation mechanism that was in the regulations.

The regulatory provision, again, focuses on making conditions in a fishing licence a matter that could give rise to a breach of the Fisheries Act.

The member for Delta—Richmond East had mentioned that the committee was of the view that enforcement in the Ontario fishery could continue even without this impugned regulation. That was from an academic perspective. One could say that if there is a breach of a fishing licence condition, the government enforcing the provision has to revoke the licence. That is true

• (1610)

However, the way the fishery enforcement has evolved over the years has meant that those who enforce the fishery have relied on the existing framework of regulations and licence conditions and may not be in an administrative position to simply begin enforcing conditions by revocation of licence, which may involve either an administrative act or a court application. They are just not sure. Rather than throw the enforcement piece into some disarray arguably, the committee has accepted that this statutory provision would allow the same enforcement framework to continue.

The member for Delta—Richmond East has been assiduously pursuing the modernization and rectification of some of the things in the Fisheries Act. He has made some points here today and will probably make some others. I encourage him to accept the big picture which would allow some margin of safety for those doing fisheries enforcement in the Ontario fishery. The member knows we are dealing with a fishery, and it is not a Sunday school environment. There is a certain way of doing things in the fishery. To destabilize enforcement could give rise to safety concerns for fishers and others.

The minister referred to a commitment to modernize the Fisheries Act, and that is important. The minister and the department have been in this mode of wanting to do a comprehensive review and modernization for some time now. I can see they have had some difficulty getting there.

One of the challenges of the Canadian fishery is the fact that it is not just one fishery. It is very complex, running through many provinces with fisheries on different coasts in the north, on the lakes and in the rivers. It is a complex thing. Some aboriginal fisheries have gone on for a long time. There are seasonal fisheries, offshore fisheries and inshore fisheries. I am not sure one size fits all. There are a lot of voices to be heard as the minister and the department move ahead to modernize, revise and provide better infrastructure for management.

I would ask members in the House to assess the bill and accept it as a one line bill intended to rectify a problem raised by colleagues in the House and reflected in the report of the Standing Joint Committee for Scrutiny of Regulations. I would ask members to

regard it as a constructive effort to respond virtually immediately to the report of the committee.

Some members will say that the department could have made this change last year, or the year before that or three years ago. It is true that the committee had reported previously without a disallowance motion on a broader package of concerns and a bill was introduced in the House last year. That bill addressed four or five separate concerns of the committee. In this new Parliament, the committee was still concerned about the offence creating mechanism in the regulations. It reported again, and we have the current situation.

I would urge members to allow quick passage of this one line bill to rectify the enforcement concerns that have been expressed. I know all members will approach the comprehensive review and reform in the way they always have. I look forward to those assessments and reviews, working on both sides of the House to try and bring about the changes that we believe are needed.

• (1615)

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to point out to my friend that in a letter to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on April 14 of this year, the committee noted that the proposals in Bill C-52 were essentially the same proposals that were included in Bill C-43 a year ago.

The committee made it clear in that letter, when it said:

To deprive a citizen of his liberty on the ground that the citizen has failed to abide by requirement imposed by a public official in the exercise of an administrative power, such as a term or condition of licence, could be thought undesirable as a matter of legislative policy.

The committee then made it quite clear that penalizing someone and putting someone in jail based on violating a policy that was put forward by a bureaucrat as opposed to Parliament was rather unseemly and unprecedented. The committee unanimously sent that letter to the minister. Now the member seems to think that this is okay.

As well, the minister himself quoted from a letter from the Ontario minister of natural resources. I will not read the quote again, but the response of the committee was:

To the extent this comment suggests that disallowance of section 36(2) would impair the ability to impose terms and conditions of licences, it does not reflect a clear understanding of the nature of section 36(2). Disallowance of that section may change the manner of enforcing compliance with terms and conditions of licences, but would certainly not affect in any way the ability to impose such terms and conditions.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** You can't enforce it.

**Mr. John Cummins:** The member opposite is saying we cannot enforce it, but we can. The Fisheries Act has been imposed and enforced for 130 years, as the member suggested, except for the last few years, without the ability of attaching terms and conditions to a licence. It is enforceable.

Why has the member opposite changed his tune, a tune that he sang so well in committee, yet he is not consistent with it today.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member must misunderstand something. I have not changed my position at all. The regulation as it stood was, in my view, ultra vires. That is the position the committee took and that is the position contained in the report.

*Government Orders*

The statute put forward by the government is an attempt to rectify the alleged ultra vires status of the regulation, to replace the regulation with a statute. The House is capable of creating statutes and offences. That is what the bill does. The difficulty with the offence being contained in the regulation was that the House as a body never gave sanction to the regulation. The House did not create the offence. The regulation did and the regulation was put in place by bureaucrats, by government officials, and we do not accept that. I have not changed my position at all.

The second point he has raised has to do with whether it is still possible to do enforcement in the fishery. I suppose one has to have two feet in rubber boots on the ground in the fishery to understand this. The enforcement regime, as it evolved, was based on an offence enforcement regime. When the fisherperson made a mistake and went offside, the sanction was a prosecution, not a licence revocation. There has not been developed in the fishery, at least not in Ontario, a licence revocation regime to enforce the conditions. The regime that is there is a prosecution regime where a person is prosecuted for breaching a condition.

The only problem, as has been pointed out, is that the offence allowing the prosecution was created by and contained in a regulation. I, the member opposite and the House are of a view that we cannot let public servants create offences. Offences are created by the House. Prosecution happens outside of here, but we in the House create the offence.

That is why I agree we need the new statutory provision. Over time if the province creates a licence revocation regime, that is fine, it can do that. However, it is not there now and not having it now could create a big problem in the Ontario part of the federal fishery.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** 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 Acadie—Bathurst, the Fisheries; the hon. member for Windsor West, the Canada-U.S. Border.

[*English*]

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate. If we look at the bill we see that it is a couple of minuscule clauses and if we were to listen to the governing party we would think that this is very simple, we will ram it through and life will go on.

But life for a lot of people involved in the fishing industry will go on quite differently if this bill passes.

I cannot help but remark, in listening to the people who have taken part in the debate so far, that we have two members from the governing party, the minister and one of the members, both of whom are lawyers. They talk about the legal implications and show that they do not understand what it is all about, but they mentioned that in order to understand it one should have one's feet in a pair of fishing boots.

The other member who has spoken, the member for Delta—Richmond East, is a fisherman, so if we are going to take someone's observations on a bill like this, with the implications it might have

for people involved in the fishery, I ask, who would we rather take advice from? Two lawyers who never caught a fish in their lives, or a person—I am sorry, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans caught a trout one time, he told me—who is a full time fisherman who knows the ins and outs and the implications of legislation?

It is also very interesting to know who has been contacting members in recent days expressing concerns about this legislation. It was not members of the committee and not lawyers, but people involved directly in the fishery.

I am going to leave a lot of the technical parts of the bill to the other 17 or so speakers we have coming up after I finish. I want to refer to some of the comments made by the minister because he raised some issues or topics in his speech that certainly need to be discussed in this place.

The minister talks about conservation. He says that without passing this piece of legislation we could have problems with conservation. I hate to wake the minister up, but we have already major problems with conservation. We have problems with conservation all across the country. We have major problems in British Columbia. All we have to do is look at any report coming out on what happened on the Fraser River in recent years, particularly this year. A number of pointed reports talk blatantly about conservation practices or the lack thereof.

We can look at the east coast and the groundfish, which was once so abundant that we could catch it in a basket. In recent years, we have seen towns all around the rural areas crumbling in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, places whose very existence was because of the fishery, crumbling simply because that resource is no longer there, because we did not conserve the resource as we should.

Who is responsible for the fishery in this country? I have asked that question of at least two, maybe three and probably all four ministers I have seen since I have been here. Let us remember that it was only last week, on May 30, that I celebrated my fifth anniversary in the House. I have been here only five years and I have already seen four ministers of fisheries and oceans. One wonders about it. I will not let it put any colour at all on the ministers because I consider them friends of mine. I am sure they are very good people and I get along very well with the present minister.

• (1625)

However, one wonders how much any minister can do when he, or maybe eventually she, will have a year or less in a department as broad as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Therefore, a lot of what goes on falls into the hands of bureaucrats. This was one of the problems raised by my colleague: the concern that bureaucrats will now control who has a licence, they will control the terms of these licences and they will control who can be sent to jail for up to two years less a day because of any offence in relation to the regulations we are talking about.

*Government Orders*

Coming back to the conservation aspect, one of the problems we have in conservation is that we have absolutely no enforcement. The department mouths platitudes about conservation, but in order to conserve we need to have firm and fair regulations, which we can argue we may or may not have, but it is the enforcement of the regulations that is so important.

This is what the minister and the member from Ontario talk about: that we need to have control to be able to enforce the regulations. What about all the other regulations we have that we have not enforced? Why are our stocks at rock bottom? Simply because of the cuts that have been made by the department, the poor decisions that have been made and the loopholes that exist. It goes on and on.

If we are going to talk about conservation because we now have a problem at hand and we are panicking about how to solve it—and I assure the minister that there is a problem, as he will find out as the day progresses—why are we not thinking about the big picture of conservation and about the total fishery in this country?

He also talks about enforcement. I mentioned that. How can we expect to protect the resource if we have no enforcement? People turn a blind eye to what goes on in our salmon rivers. On many other rivers, we have seen such a large cut in the number of protection officers that people can do whatever they want. I guess it is human nature that if we can get away with something, we will do it. If it swims, catch it, and if it flies, shoot it: that is the feeling many people have. They do not worry about conserving, but that is what the department is supposed to do.

Then we have the abuses on the offshore off the Atlantic coast, whereby we send out our boats with solid men and women dedicated to the cause, to the department, whether they be members of the Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans patrol boats. They go out there and find, time after time, foreign boats blatantly abusing our resource by catching fish they are not supposed to catch, using gear they are not supposed to use and fishing where they are not supposed to fish. All our people can do is go aboard, sometimes to be kicked off, and issue citations.

A citation, as I have said over and over, is similar to a warning ticket on the highway, whereby all that can be done is give out a warning ticket, with no fines and no imprisonment. Nothing will happen. The next day the person can speed by the checkpoint again and pick up another warning ticket. Those boats throw their citations overboard, go home, unload and come back to fish again and abuse the resources, and we cannot do a darn thing about it.

Therefore, when we are talking about conservation and protection we had better look very closely at what we are doing when we have powers to do those things. The minister says we need powers in the act to be able to deal with this issue. What about the powers we have that we are not using and have not used over the years?

What about the bill itself? What does it really do? As I say, I will leave the technicalities to my colleagues who will speak after me, but I want to put on the record the section pertaining to the concerns expressed by the Ontario government and the minister from Ontario. What will happen if the regulation is revoked? That was basically the question. Is this fishery in danger? To listen to the minister and the minister from Ontario, if this regulation is revoked, we lose total

control of our fishery. Everybody will be out there catching, poaching and whatever, and we will not be able to do a thing to control it. That is the height of nonsense.

The Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations included in its report a letter from the Minister of Natural Resources from the province of Ontario. It expressed concern about subsection 36(2) of the regulations being revoked and concluded as follows.

- (1630)

In closing, the Committee wishes to briefly address the statement by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources that:

Terms and conditions [of licences] are currently the only mechanisms by which Ontario can establish allowable quota, areas where fishing can occur, designates who can take fish under a licence, reporting for commercial fishing licences.

To the extent this comment suggests that disallowance of section 36(2) would impair the ability to impose terms and conditions of licences, it does not reflect a clear understanding of the nature of section 36(2).

These are not my words or the words of the member for Delta—Richmond East, who will again elaborate on this. We are not the ones making the regulations and we are not the ones saying this. It has been said by the scrutiny of regulations committee. These are the words of the committee.

The scrutiny of regulations committee is basically saying that the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources does not have a clear understanding of the section and his interpretation is wrong. It states:

Disallowance of that section may change the manner of enforcing compliance with terms and conditions of licences, but would certainly not affect in any way the ability to impose such terms and conditions.

Consequently, the concern about not being able to enforce regulations or protect the resource is not valid. The committee makes that quite clear. The committee goes on to say:

In the same letter, the Minister goes so far as to suggest that the disallowance of section 36(2) would “threaten the sustainability of our fisheries resources”.

The committee states:

Whether or not section 36(2) remains in the Regulations, the authority to issue licences and to impose terms and conditions on the licence would remain unimpaired, as would the ability to enforce observance of these terms and conditions. The imposition of a fine or a jail term for breach of a licence condition, as opposed to suspending or cancelling the same licence, has nothing to do with the sustainability of the fishery resource.

While your Committee understands that the federal and provincial Ministers favour the enforcement of terms and conditions of licences through fines and imprisonment rather than licence suspensions or cancellations, the Committee would be remiss in its statutory responsibility if it allowed this policy preference to override the principle that the Executive may not create offences punishable by criminal sanctions without clear authority granted by Parliament. It is the responsibility of the Executive to ask the Houses for that authority.

All the committee is saying is that the authority to issue fines or to bring on imprisonment has to be, of course, in the hands of the minister or the minister's bureaucrats, and that in itself is a very dangerous thing.

Really, the justification that is being used by the minister and the members on that side who have spoken so far certainly does not jibe at all with what the scrutiny of regulations committee members are saying, nor with the reality of the legislation.

*Government Orders*

Again, we have talked about the conditions around licences. Here we are in this House disputing perhaps what the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations is saying, backing up what a minister from Ontario was saying even though the committee says he is off base on his interpretation of the regulations, but we are not at all concerned about other conditions of licences.

I say to the minister, we have across the country a fishery where, in order to participate, we have to be a holder of a valid licence. That licence can only be given by the minister and can only be given to an individual who is fishing whatever resource it might be. That licence cannot be given to a friend, a sister or a brother, or even passed on, as it used to be, to members of one's family without the direction and the okay of the minister. I have no argument with that.

● (1635)

The problem is, of course, that many of the people who are fishing today have a licence, are supposed to be the owner off the boat on which they are fishing and supposed to have control of what they are doing, are there in name only because the fishery has been taken over by people who can afford to buy licences. Instead of the fellow down the road, who fished all his life, being able to walk up and pay his \$100 to get a licence, a licence now, depending on what we are fishing, whether it be lobster, shrimp, crab or lucrative resources like that, costs anywhere from \$100,000 to over \$1 million. The average fisherman certainly cannot afford to buy such licences.

We have a whole new, under the table, set of dealings operating which gives control of the fishery to, first, industry in many cases where we have the owners, the processors, buying boats, buying licences and having some fisherman sign his name as if he were the real owner when he has no ownership and no control because of all kinds of trust agreements under the table.

We want to talk about conditions around licences. These are the issues with which the minister should concern himself because we are placing the control of the fishery into the hands of very few people and we are taking people who earned a living for years from the fishery out of the industry entirely.

Years ago, because of a lack of technology and because of the type of gear we used, many of our fishing crews were made up of several individuals, from a cod trap where there were five or six people because of the size and the weight, in order to be able to haul it, to operating some of our larger boats on the west coast, our seiner being is one.

Technology changed that to some degree but what changed it more than anything else was the change in the fishery. Instead of having all of these people now on the east coast fishing cod, most of them are fishing crab. In order to fish crab, one does not need five or six in his small boat any more. The owner needs himself and somebody to steer the boat, which, quite often, is his wife or somebody from the family, so whole crews are being wiped out and displaced.

Even though they fished all their lives side by side with the enterprise owner, question mark, these people are being told they are no longer equal. Only the enterprise owners can have a core licence to operate and they can go look for a job as they always have with them.

Of course, with the change in fishery there are no longer any jobs. In some cases we have had brothers who fished together all their lives in the same boat, using the same gear and sharing the same expenses but somewhere along the line the boat was licensed in the name of one of them rather than the other. The person who now owns the boat is the enterprise owner and he can get a core licence because he has his own boat and he had it registered. The other person is told that he cannot have a core licence because he does not own an enterprise even though he fished all his life in the same boat with his brother.

I do not envy the minister one bit. I am not saying this in a critical sense to the minister because he inherited this mess but it is getting worse and trying to deal with it is a major chore. However it has to be dealt with because too many people who have lived all their lives depending on the fishery are being pushed aside and the people benefiting from the fishery resource are the ones sitting in a condominium, quite often in Florida, with their feet up on the table, drinking pina colodas and calling back home to see how much crab they caught today and how much money went into their bank account. The crew member goes home with his minuscule cheque wondering if he will get 12 weeks so he can collect unemployment insurance while the owner is enjoying himself.

I am not exaggerating here. I say to the minister, we have a minor problem here, not a major one, that can be dealt with by leaving it alone, but let us deal with the big issues because we have lots of them.

● (1640)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from St. John's South—Mount Pearl who is obviously very knowledgeable about the fishery. I was on the fisheries committee with him for a period of time and he has a sincere interest in the subject matter. He has a great knowledge of the fishery obviously from his own province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

With respect to this issue, I believe the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl made some comments about receiving some calls or input from stakeholders. Many of my colleagues on this side of the House have also heard from stakeholders in the province of Ontario who are directly affected by this situation. The calls or the interventions we are getting are very much to pass the legislation and to pass it quickly. It is in the interest of a very important fishery in Ontario that this be done forthwith.

I wonder if the member, when he heard from stakeholders or members of the public or the industry, heard something different with respect to this important measure for the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for getting the name of my riding correct. The last time he referred to me in the House he called me the member for St. John's South—Pearl Harbour. I know it can be pretty hot at times in St. John's South—Mount Pearl but I have not had to duck any bombs yet.

*Government Orders*

The member raises a concern about the input from people in Ontario who have expressed a concern with this regulation. I say that maybe he should call home and ask the fishermen in Prince Edward Island what they think about giving the minister the power and the control and, worse still, giving the parliamentary secretary the power to throw them in jail if they do not comply with licences.

I say to the member that I can understand why there is some concern in Ontario about this regulation. It is simply because the Minister of Fisheries has raised the concern thinking that if this is not corrected he will lose complete control over the fishery and it will be unmanageable.

The minister approached the scrutiny of regulations committee with that concern and it is based on that concern that the minister and the department is acting. However the scrutiny of regulations committee said that this concern was not valid, that this would not happen. The same powers to conserve will still be there.

I say to the member that maybe we should look at this in the big picture. Sometimes in order to solve a problem we come up with a mechanism to deal with that but we are creating a bigger problem by doing so.

I have no intention of trying to obstruct my good friend the minister from doing his work. What we are really trying to do here is to keep the minister from getting into greater trouble by changing regulations that will open up the floodgates and give him an even bigger headache than he has at present.

• (1645)

**Mr. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl. I was intrigued to hear that members of the government are considering that their colleague in the provincial government in Ontario is just not quite up to the job. They do not share his views.

I listened as one from Ontario, from a part where fishing is not a great industry, but I have followed the issue in the national media. I know it was many years ago that another member of the government from Newfoundland was in New York showing the people the boats and the nets that were being used by the foreign fishers who were breaking the rules. He said that the government would act and solve the problems so that the fishery could be saved.

For people, such as myself, who were observing from afar, we were sort of under the impression that all these problems had been solved but, apparently, that is not the case. There continue to be real problems in the management of the fishery. This is after the government has been saying for 12 years now that it had solved the problems, but they have not been solved.

Perhaps the member could tell us how it is that government policies have not allowed those problems to be solved?

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Madam Speaker, first, this is not a west coast or an Atlantic coast gang up on Ontario. This is just an issue that happens to be raised by the minister for Ontario about regulations that apply to Ontario.

Many of the issues we dealt with in the fisheries committee, such as the invasive species, concerns about aquaculture and certainly the

Rouge River problems, we also dealt with many problems specifically relating to Ontario where the members of the committee worked very hard and diligently to draw attention to the valid concerns of the people of Ontario.

In relation to the efforts in the past by a former minister, he mentioned the arrest of the *Estai* by then minister Brian Tobin, who was known as the "Tobinator" because he went out there and had the intestinal fortitude to arrest the boat and bring it into port.

At the time, however, Mr. Tobin was eyeing the prime minister-ship and used it to his best advantage by going to New York, hanging up a net, holding up a baby turbot and then saying, "Here is what these terrible people are doing". As a government, we proceeded to give them back their boat and pay all their expenses. I believe we were sued for even bringing them into port but to save face we negotiated to give them extra turbot. However we were the big losers. Publicity-wise, the minister gained some but the country and the people of the country were the big losers.

That is how the Liberals operate. Unfortunately, there is a lot of talk and a lot of hype but very little substance and we are seeing the same thing here today.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the member knows, this is a matter where a regulation has been disallowed. It is very important for the Ontario fishing industry. It is basically the lynchpin of its regulatory authority. It is certainly an item that behooves this House to deal with as expeditiously as possible.

In responding to the question from the member for Beauséjour, and in even the last question that was asked, the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl talked about fisheries on the east coast and we have had talks about fisheries in the Fraser River, but the matter that is before the House is a specific issue dealing with commercial fisheries here in the province of Ontario.

**An hon. member:** That is not true.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** That is true.

I want to re-ask the question that was asked of him previously. Instead of talking about the fisheries off the northern coast of Newfoundland and about the fisheries in the Fraser River, has the member, as the official opposition critic for Fisheries and Oceans, contacted the commercial fishing industry in Ontario? I assume he has asked for its input. I would assume that this industry is very concerned about this matter and that it wants to move on this legislation as soon as possible. Would it not be the better course to speak to the fishing industry here in Ontario and listen to it and respond to its requests?

• (1650)

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Madam Speaker, let me say to the member that this regulation does not just apply to the people of Ontario. This regulation applies to everybody across Canada who is directly involved in the fishing industry. It relates to regulations that we are concerned about in Ontario.

*Government Orders*

Did we speak to them? No, we did not have hearings with the fishermen from Ontario. Why? It was only a couple of days ago this two clause bill was sprung in the House, with no briefing, no background, nothing. We had to persuade the minister to give us a briefing on Thursday to tell us what this was about and he tried to ram it through the House without any consultation whatsoever.

However I would say to the member that in light of the concerns they have in Charlottetown and in P.E.I., especially with herring fish, maybe he should talk to some of his own people so that we could solve some of these problems too.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the riding's name may not be Pearl Harbor, as my friend from Newfoundland pointed out earlier, but as far as I am concerned today's debate is a total aberration.

I was listening to my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River, who said that we had no choice but to pass the bill in question, because acting otherwise might jeopardize Ontario's commercial fishery. What is surprising to me in such a statement is that we are not talking about a new problem; it has been around for years. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans had the opportunity to review the legislation but chose not to.

To put all this into context, I will remind the House that eight years ago, in 1997, the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations criticized the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for making regulations which it described as *ultra vires*. In other words, the department was making regulations without being expressly permitted to do so by law. The committee, with which some members are very familiar, denounced the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations, among others.

We can go on with the historical overview. Bill C-43 was introduced during the second session of the 37th Parliament. This goes to show that the problem is not new. The bill was to amend the legislation so that the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations could be implemented. Once again, the committee reacted, and gave its opinion: it was opposed. The Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations did notice that Bill C-43 was fixing the problem, but it denounced its subsection 10(1), which has now made its way into the current Bill C-52.

In my opinion, this is a dispute that has been going on for many years and that cannot be resolved with Bill C-52. We will recall that Bill C-43, the predecessor of Bill C-52, was never passed. Now, Bill C-52 only retains subsection 10(1), precisely the subsection challenged by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. I cannot conceive how one can put such a bill before the House today and expect the House to adopt it.

What is the aim of Bill C-52? It has only one, which bears mentioning to all the fishers, be they on the west coast, east coast or in Ontario. It aims to expressly provide that a breach of a term or condition of a permission referred to in section 4 of the act, or of a lease or licence issued under the act, particularly for the purposes of stocking or artificial breeding or for scientific purposes, is an offence. As if scientific research were an offence under the legislation or the regulations. This bill contains a very significant incongruity, in our opinion.

Under section 78 of the Fisheries Act, only violations of this act or the regulations constitute an offence liable to a fine or imprisonment. This is extremely important. This is why we clearly cannot support this bill. Violations of the legislation or its regulations constitute an offence solely under section 78 of the Fisheries Act.

However, the conditions of a permission are not statutory provisions or regulations, and the violation of such a condition does not constitute a violation of the act or its regulations within the meaning of section 78 of the act itself.

• (1655)

So, the breach of the terms and conditions of permissions, leases or licences is governed by section 9 of the act, which provides that the minister may suspend or cancel a licence, lease, etc. That section alone has the effect of penalizing a citizen. This is extremely important, because it concerns all fishers. Indeed, the bill will not only apply to residents of Ontario, as mentioned by my colleagues earlier, but to all fishers from coast to coast.

The only effect of this bill will be to deprive a citizen of his freedom, on the grounds that he may not have complied with a requirement imposed by a public official exercising an administrative power. As our colleagues pointed out earlier, it is extremely important to understand that only the House of Commons has the authority to pass legislation and to impose fines or prison terms. This power cannot be given to a public official from the administrative sector, but this is precisely what Bill C-52 does.

The Bloc Québécois does not agree with the bill before us.

Earlier, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River told us that the department had some problems amending the Fisheries Act. For various reasons and motives the department had not yet been able to propose changes to the Fisheries Act. I have news for the hon. member. The Fisheries Act has been in existence for 137 years. During that period, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans had ample time to sit down and propose gradual changes to the act, so as to adapt it to today's world.

I do not buy the claim that, over a period of 137 years, the department did not have time to look at the act and see what amendments should be made. To make such a statement is really not being very serious. Moreover, they are coming up with Bill C-52 at the very last minute. Yet, we have known since 1997 about the problem, about the fact that the act would have to be amended and adapted to modern day fishing conditions.

*Government Orders*

At the present time, of course, the Fisheries Act can indeed cause problems. Still, as several of my colleagues have just pointed out, the legislation is not what has ended us up in major disasters, nor what has done away with our resources. Nor is it the act that led us to one moratorium in the east in the early 1990s and a second in the early 2000s. It is not the Fisheries Act that has brought the situation to where it is. It is poor resource management that has deprived us of the resource.

Precautionary principles should have been applied to managing the resource. The ability to do so was there and the means were there. If these precautionary principles had been applied, we would still have an abundant resource.

We can talk about what is going on at present. The standing committee has just tabled its umpteenth report on the Fraser River salmon. Once again we realize that Fisheries and Oceans has learned nothing from the past. Hon. members will recall that, back in 1994, there was a similar crisis to last year's. This generated several reports, particularly the one by Mr. Fraser, former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and former Speaker of this House. Having stated the problem, he proposed a broad range of recommendations which made it possible to remedy the situation.

It is as if the department has not learned or retained anything of what it was told in the past, everything submitted to it by the various people whom DFO itself commissioned to carry out studies and make the necessary checks. It has not implemented the regulations. The way the resource has been managed has nothing to do with Bill C-52. Management of the resource has been poorly planned and poorly handled by Fisheries and Oceans, and by the Government of Canada in general, ever since Confederation.

● (1700)

In recent years, fishing practices have clearly changed. The issues of fishing have changed and, overall, everything has changed. The pressure on the resource was therefore greater. However, they could manage that pressure and adapt as time went on to new fishing techniques and practices.

As regards the Fisheries Act, I read, among other things, a report released in April 2004 by Donald McRae and Peter H. Pearse. It mentioned of course that the Fisheries Act was out of date and that it should be amended. However, it is not by amending it piecemeal, in tiny bits, from time to time, that they will resolve the problem. On the contrary, they run the risk of creating a problem bigger than the one they are trying to solve.

Indeed, if tomorrow morning the public service were given almost *carte blanche* power—almost the power to imprison—Parliament would be deprived of one of its main functions, that of passing legislation making it possible to impose penalties.

I note that, despite what our colleagues in government have told us, the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations never agreed to subclause 10(1), which the government is trying to impose today under Bill C-52. Never did the committee agree to the clause moving forward through a bill. There was never any question of that. The committee has always withheld its approval. A notice of disallowance is in fact before the House, which should be examined in the coming days.

Obviously, we are going to oppose Bill C-52 for the reasons I have just cited.

We want a total reform of the Fisheries Act. However, an overhaul of the Fisheries Act does not mean the government will better manage resources. It would take real political will to protect them. The primary function of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is, in fact, to protect and safeguard resources for now and for the future, in other words, for those fishing today and for those who would like to fish in the future.

● (1705)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend for his accurate depiction of just what Bill C-52 is all about and also for his clear understanding of the fishery.

Over the past couple of years the member has travelled to British Columbia with the committee. He made a valuable contribution to the discussion on the fishery on the Fraser River and the government's inadequacies in that regard. The information that he received on that trip is evident in his comments today.

The issue that bothers me and one which I think bothers the member is the whole notion in Bill C-52 of transferring Parliament's authority to make laws, which can be enforced by fine or jail time, to a fisheries department bureaucrat. I find that particularly odious. I find it so because the individual subject to the fines would not have the ability to challenge the particular law in court because a bureaucrat would have the authority to make the law.

If a fisherman was charged under a law flowing out of Bill C-52, the courts would not provide any remedy. The scrutiny of regulations committee would certainly not be able to find any remedy because it would have been pushed aside. Whether or not that regulation would reflect the will of the Fisheries Act would not matter and the scrutiny of regulations committee would not be able to act because there would be no room for it in Bill C-52. If fishermen were to come to members of Parliament, there is nothing they could do short of changing the act to remedy their difficulties.

I want to ask the member if the view that I have expressed on Bill C-52 accurately depicts what he fears if the bill goes ahead? The Fisheries Act, as old as it is, holds the minister accountable and allows the regulations to pass scrutiny under the joint committee for the scrutiny of regulations. It offers protection to fishermen. During my time in this place, the government has brought forward two bills to renew the Fisheries Act and neither one of them afforded that sort of protection to fishermen. I wonder if my friend shares those concerns.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Madam Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague's question. I have the same type of concern. I think he understood my speech very well. He has made similar comments previously.

*Government Orders*

In my view, we cannot pass Bill C-52 because we would be giving power to public servants that should be reserved for the House of Commons alone. We cannot give public servants the power to send people to prison. Bill C-52 goes that far. If someone commits an offence under Bill C-52 or one of its regulations, it is the public servant who has the authority to assign the penalty, and not the House of Commons.

It is important to specify that any criminal penalty must be passed by the House of Commons. Here, that is not the case. This is a slippery slope, which seems extremely dangerous to me.

If we presented this to the fishers on the west coast—my colleague talked about this and I thank him for it; I enjoyed my time there—or the east coast, or even in Ontario, they would say this makes no sense. The day they understand the meaning of Bill C-52, people will say it is nonsense. They would not be able to defend themselves in court because of the arbitrary power of a public servant. This is extremely dangerous. I think my colleague understood that very well.

● (1710)

[English]

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, some of my colleagues from the Conservatives and the Bloc have raised some important issues regarding Bill C-52. We are hearing that there is a need to act expeditiously; however, this bill it seems has had little thought. We have heard that there are some concerns that if this bill is not passed that it is going to seriously jeopardize the management of the fisheries in Ontario.

In fact, some of the literature that has come out of the department talks about the fact that the need for this bill is a key part of proper management and control of the fishery as well as conservation and protection of fish.

It seems to me that if we are that concerned about protection and management of the fisheries, and that if we are prepared to act in such a rapid fashion over an issue that is impacting on Ontario fishers, that surely after years and years of concern that has been raised in other fisheries, that we could be acting as expeditiously as possible.

Part of the challenge is that many of us do not have faith in what the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, more commonly referred to as DFO, is doing with the management and protection of fisheries that many Canadians are asking for.

I come from the west coast constituency of Nanaimo—Cowichan and we have a longstanding history around management of fisheries. This is not the first time that we have raised issues around the health and safety of our fisheries. I need only to go back to the 2004 report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. I will read a couple of points out of that report because there have been years of concerns raised and still we do not have policies in place. The report stated:

Overall, we are not satisfied with the progress made by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in responding to the recommendations we made in the three previous audits in 1997, 1999 and 2000. While many stocks are abundant, some Atlantic and Pacific salmon stocks are in trouble. We continue to identify significant gaps in managing risks. - The department has not finalized the Wild Salmon Policy, which would set out clear objectives and guiding principles. The policy would also bring together

biological, economic and social factors- for fisheries and resource management, habitat protection and salmon enhancement. - There are shortcomings in information on salmon stocks and habitat and scientific knowledge on the potential environmental effects of salmon aquaculture and aquatic ecosystems. - There are weaknesses in regulatory approvals, enforcement and monitoring of salmon aquacultural operations. This includes approving aquaculture site applications, assessing cumulative effects and monitoring salmon aquaculture operations to prevent harmful destruction of habitats. - There has been inadequate co-ordination between federal and provincial governments in managing fish habitat, undertaking research, approving aquaculture site applications, and sharing information.

The report goes on to talk about the three previous audits regarding the salmon stocks on the Pacific coast indicating that they were under stress. In 1999 they found that Pacific salmon fisheries were in trouble, that the long term sustainability of the fisheries was at risk because of overfishing, habitat loss and other factors.

I only have to point back to previous stories that came from the west coast. It is legend, but the Cowichan elders in my riding talk about the fact that they used to be able to walk across the backs of the salmon to get from one side of the river to the other. They talk about the fact that fish were so plentiful that they would jump into the net. Today we are in serious trouble. Today we are lucky if we can even see a fish on the Cowichan River

Recently under Canada Reads, one of the books was called *Rockbound*. It is a wonderful story of Newfoundland at the beginning of the last century. The story talks about the very hard life that fishers have, but it also talks about how plentiful fish were at that point.

● (1715)

The minister spoke about the need for the modernization of the Fisheries Act and a comprehensive review and reform. Yet we continue to wait for this to happen. We have heard some of my colleagues across the floor say that we have had a Fisheries Act in place for 137 years and that act has failed to keep pace with the changes happening in Canada.

I want to talk about the current DFO wild salmon policy. At the time the commissioner for sustainability issued her report, the wild salmon policy was still to come. In December 2004 the wild salmon policy was issued for review. It has been in the public domain for a number of months and in April a new draft was to be available. Apparently it is available. One cannot get it online. One must send an email to get a copy of the current wild salmon policy.

My understanding, although not really clear, is that the next stage is the development of operational guidelines. When I look at the Fisheries and Oceans Canada website and its information sheet from February 15, it talks about what is new in the policy. I thought this was a really interesting statement. It talks about the state of disarray in the ministry. It states:

The Wild Salmon Policy proposes a fundamental transformation in the way Pacific salmon, their habitats, and dependent ecosystems are managed.

Many of us would say that it is about time and ask how many more times we need to hear that. It goes on to state:

The WSP is a commitment to restore and maintain biodiversity in Pacific salmon (including their habitats and related ecosystems). The policy formalizes a gradual evolution in salmon management that has happened over the last 20 years. While management in the past was focused on the major stocks and fisheries, today attention has turned to the protection of biodiversity and a broader array of benefits from Pacific salmon.

That is great. How many salmon have been saved by this gradual evolution? What we have seen with this gradual evolution of policy is a Pacific wild salmon stock that is under ever increasing threat. We do not want a gradual evolution policy. We want a policy that can be implemented immediately and one that is actually going to do something about enhancing the health and vitality of our salmon stocks.

The salmon stocks are absolutely critical, and I am talking wild salmon, to the health of British Columbia fisheries. I am speaking more specifically, because that is where I come from, around the coastal communities.

The Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council talked about the fact that the fishery is not just about economics. It is also about social, cultural and environmental issues. In its May 5 release it stated:

The federal government's capacity to conserve and scientifically manage the Pacific salmon fisheries continues to be eroded, according to the annual report of the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (PFRCC).

The report, issued today, notes that Fisheries & Oceans Canada has been focused on dealing with budget cuts when it should be directing its attention towards managing this valuable resource. It questions the government's capacity to do an effective job in areas of enforcement, habitat protection and restoration, salmon enhancement, research and stock assessment, and also calls for the Department to open its management to public scrutiny about the effectiveness of its choices.

I would welcome more public scrutiny of how this department is managing our fisheries. This has been an ongoing saga. When we start looking at the value of the fisheries, we talk about the fact that the fishery stock has actually been contributing substantial amounts of money to the B.C. economy.

In a paper that was prepared in May 2004 by the T. Buck Suzuki Foundation, it talked about the value of the commercial fishery to British Columbia. This was a submission to the public review of the federal moratorium on offshore oil and gas in May 2004. In its executive summary, it stated:

The commercial fishing industry still generates revenues in excess of one-third of a billion dollars (\$358 million in 2002) and contributes \$170 million to BC's Gross Domestic Product. Between 10,000 to 15,000 people earn a living from fishing or working in fish processing plants, a variable number because of a variable fishery."

• (1720)

Much more is at stake, however, if one looks at the magnitude of the entire marine sector in B.C., including marine tourism, the sportsfishing industry and aquaculture. According to a study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, B.C. marine-based industries employ over 20,000 and contribute a total GDP over \$600 million and revenues far in excess of \$2 billion. The importance of the commercial fishery to smaller coastal communities and First Nations is far more significant than the simple economics would suggest, as in many cases, fishing is the major or one of the major job producers in many communities. Generations of First Nations people and non-native fishermen have relied on the fisheries for their livelihoods.

One only needs to look at communities like Sointula to see what is happening to some of our coastal communities. As the fisheries become increasingly threatened, and increasingly concentrated I might add, there has been much talk about the ITQs in terms of how it affects coastal communities, not only the fishers but also suppliers, the marine repair sector, and as this paper points out, tourism and sports fishing. It is very important that we have an integrated, comprehensive strategy that looks at the vitality of our fisheries.

I have spoken in the House in the past around community economic development. One of the underlying principles of

### *Government Orders*

community economic development is that we have local control over local resources. I have heard many of the fishers from the east coast say that it is the local fishers, not the big corporate, business fishers, who understand what is happening on the ground. When there is local control over local resources, we end up with communities that have an inherent interest in preserving that resource.

This is a vital part for which many fishers are asking. They are asking for a different look at the way communities are included in the conversations around these fisheries.

In 2002 the Pacific Salmon Foundation did an analysis on where money was going in fisheries. I do not have much hope that the situation has changed. It talked about the fact that \$44.5 million per annum had been cut back from salmon restoration programs by the government. It then goes on to do a detailed analysis.

However, the foundation also talks about the fact, as others have alluded, that fisheries is a very complex field to manage. We not only have a very important federal government role in it, but we also have a provincial government role. It talks about the fact that although the federal government has responsibility for fisheries, salmon and salmon habitat, most of the impact that affect salmon and salmon habitat are the responsibility of the provincial government. It talks about hydro generation, agriculture, mining, forestry, water and urban development. It talks about how critical it is that both levels of government be involved in coming up with solutions, which leads me back to the current bill.

On the one hand we hear that this is an absolutely essential piece to protect Ontario fishers. On the other hand there are concerns about how this legislation would affect fishing communities from coast to coast. Here we have an example where we have one provincial government at the table with one small piece of a bill, yet we have, as far as I can see, no consideration of how other provincial governments may be impacted by the legislation.

The bill is being touted as a technical piece of housekeeping that is required to clean up some anomalies in the regulations and that it is an important piece for us to look at so we do not impact Ontario fishers. I would encourage the government to move forward on looking at the overall fisheries in Canada. Instead of just talking about the need to modernize the act and to have comprehensive reform, we get on with doing it before the west coast ends up in the same position as the east coast, with a cod moratorium that does not look like it is going to be lifted in any kind of timeframe. We do not want to see the wild salmon stocks in British Columbia end up in that same position.

Those salmon stocks are not only important for the culture of first nations, the economy and environment, they are also an integral part of our entire ecosystem. Many of our other critters depend upon fish, whether they grizzly bears or whatever. It is important that we ensure we are not doing something unintended with legislation. It is important that we step back and take a look at the overall fisheries and get on with ensuring that we have a fishery for our children and our grandchildren.

*Government Orders*

● (1725)

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my friend opposite in her remarks said that she would welcome more public scrutiny into the fishery and I do not think anybody on this side of the House would disagree with that comment.

The issue today is whether Bill C-52 would allow more public scrutiny of the Fisheries Act. That is the issue before us.

Let me just lay the terms out of what Bill C-52 means to me and then I would like to know if she concurs with my assessment.

Bill C-52 takes away the regulatory authority, the scrutiny that Parliament enjoys over regulations that are put forward by the government, and gives that regulatory making ability to a public servant, a civil servant or a bureaucrat. In doing that, it removes the oversight of the regulatory making procedures from Parliament. Currently under the Fisheries Act if a regulation is put in place, that regulation will be examined by the scrutiny or regulations committee, the joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons, to determine if that regulation fulfills the intention that Parliament declared in the act.

If the bureaucrat is attaching conditions to a licence, that oversight ability of the joint committee is removed and there is less public scrutiny, certainly less scrutiny by the House, on that regulation authority making by the bureaucrat. That is my take on it. Is that what the member opposite is saying.

● (1730)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Madam Speaker, what the member highlights is the fact that we have a bill that has been presented to the House without a lot of forethought. It appears there is a great deal of confusion about what the actual impact would be on the ability of the House to continue to have oversight.

As the member pointed out, it is absolutely essential that the House and the committee do not lose their ability to ensure our fishers and our industry are being well served and well protected. In terms of more public scrutiny, we have observed in any number of areas that what we need is more openness and transparency in legislation and in the way departments operate, not less. Anything that will contribute to less oversight by the House and less transparency before the House is not something I would support.

I come back to the need for us to have an integrated strategy. We one-off things with a bill like this, I am very concerned about what the longer term impact would be and what it all means in terms of the health of our fisheries.

**Mr. John Cummins:** Madam Speaker, the member and I are singing from the same song sheet on this issue. The issue is that under the Fisheries Act the government has the ability to put in place a regulation.

If we look at section 184 of Bill C-62, the Fisheries Act, introduced in Parliament in 1996, it talks about offences under the act to which section 181 applies and the manner in which those offences may be described in tickets. It talks about classes of offences referred to in paragraph (d) and the amount of the fine for each class.

Basically, section 184 details sections under the act or it gives an overview of the regulations under the act, the government's ability to respond to violations and the manner in which it will respond to violations. As we indicated earlier, the joint committee provides the scrutiny to ensure that those regulations meet with the intentions of Parliament.

Bill C-52 gives that regulation making authority, although it talks about licensed conditions, to bureaucrats. It gives those bureaucrats the unfettered ability to put in place their own form of regulation to govern the fishery, to give access to quotas to friends of the government and to discriminate between groups of fishermen.

The question then becomes what recourse do fishermen have to challenge these conditions that have been attached to their licence? They will not be able to challenge offensive regulations in court because Parliament will have given bureaucrats the authority to make those regulations. The fishermen will not have the ability to come to us as members of Parliament and ask of how we can help them on an issue because Parliament will have given the bureaucrats the authority to act. In order to challenge a bureaucrat, we would have to change the law.

That is the problem with this legislation. It puts the fishermen in a very vulnerable position. It gives the bureaucrats the authority that one might expect the minister to have, but even the minister's authority is held in check by Parliament.

These bureaucrats will have more authority than Parliament even dreamt of giving the fisheries minister. That is why this bill is so offensive.

● (1735)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Madam Speaker, we have touched on this. When we are looking at regulation that comes outside the scope of parliamentary scrutiny, then we are looking at something we do not want to see happen.

Again, many do not have the confidence in DFO because of the past track record in terms of managing the fishery and not fulfilling a mandate in terms of protection and conservation of the species. The more control that ends up in the bureaucracy, the less comfortable people will feel around the fact that the fishery will be protected.

If there is not a way for Parliament to have oversight on this, it will be very much a challenge for us to feel comfortable with that.

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one would have thought that members on the government side would have been eager to now stand in their allotted time and defend their bill, but apparently that is not the case. To be quite honest, I can certainly understand why the members opposite do not want to stand to defend this particular bill.

Let us look at the bill. Bill C-52 amends the Fisheries Act to "provide that a breach of a term or condition of a permission" granted under section 4 of the act, "or of a licence or lease" under the act is an offence. This amendment is meant to make it easier for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to enforce the act, so the department says.

*Government Orders*

The issue here is that Bill C-52 was before this House as Bill C-33 in the third session of the 37th Parliament, and as Bill C-43, again in the 37th Parliament. Both of these bills died on the order paper. In a sense, it does not really take a whole of thought to understand why.

At the introduction of Bill C-52, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans suggested that the bill comes about because the Senate and House of Commons Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations tabled a disallowance report, and the government failed to respond to that disallowance report with substantive legislation.

There is a problem there. If we look at the backgrounder document that the government distributed to members of the opposition and others, we will see that it states that this bill adds a clause to the Fisheries Act requiring licence holders to obey conditions of their licence, effectively moving the regulation in question into the act and thereby obtaining permission from Parliament for such a requirement.

That particular phrase rather clouds the issue, because it does not really tell the story of what this bill would do. The government says it would like to have passed the bill in all its splendour this afternoon and alluded to the fact that it is “hurry up” and that if the bill is not passed the Ontario minister will be unable to manage the fishery.

It should be noted today that the scrutiny of regulations committee first advised the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 2000 that the governing Ontario fisheries regulations were illegal, which means that five years ago the government was advised that these regulations were illegal.

The regulations governing the Fisheries Act and the act itself actually make up quite a good document. It is 137 years old, as some members opposite suggested today, and to be quite honest I think it is still quite a good bill. The bill itself makes very clear what the minister's powers are and it makes very clear what the minister's obligations are when it comes to protecting the resource.

On the offence side, sections 181 through to 184 make clear the procedures that government must follow if it is going to enforce the act, and I think those procedures are laid out in a very clear fashion for everyone to understand. The regulations that flow from that act are scrutinized by the joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons to ensure that the regulations are in fact consistent with the obligations as set out in this particular act.

Therefore, I do not have a problem with the Fisheries Act and neither does the Senate and House of Commons Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, which makes it very clear that within the act itself the government has the authority to manage the fisheries.

● (1740)

If Bill C-52 is not passed today, it does not mean the end of the world, as the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources suggests. It simply means that perhaps a little more work is going to have to be done by the bureaucrats to put in place appropriate regulations to ensure that those regulations are in compliance with the Fisheries Act and meet the demands of the act. That should not be too difficult for government to do. In fact, that should be the obligation.

I would like to now turn the clock back a little. My friend from Winnipeg will probably remember this issue better than most. I am referring back to March 6, 1986, and a speech in the House by the Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn, who was the President of the Privy Council at that time and the minister responsible for regulatory affairs. At that time he introduced in the House the citizens' code of regulatory fairness. He stated that it was a unique initiative based on the principle that Canadians are entitled to know in as much detail as possible exactly how government regulations are to carry out responsibilities. Citizens have a right to know the rules of the game and know that they will be fair.

That is what the citizens' code of regulatory fairness was all about. I will quote from the guiding principle of this regulatory policy. Principle No. 6 notes, “Regulation is legislation and, as such, will be brought more fully under the control of elected government representatives and subjected to more effective review by Parliament”.

Principle No. 7 of the regulatory policy stated that “the public has an important role to play in the development of regulation and the government will increase public access to and participation in the regulatory process while simplifying procedures and restricting legalities to the minimum”.

Is that not interesting? Back in 1986, almost 20 years ago, introduced in the House was a document which in fact I think speaks very clearly about what the government is not doing today and what it should be doing, the document being, of course, this citizens' code of regulatory fairness.

According to the policies and the guiding principles of this piece of legislation from 1986, it required public participation in the regulatory process and input from the public to ensure that the public fully understood the regulatory process that they were to be governed by and guided by, and that they had input. “Anything but” is the case today.

The code's purpose, as Mr. Hnatyshyn stated, was “to provide a high set of standards for ensuring regulatory fair play”. He said, “The code also provides an explicit basis for judging the performance of regulators. In this way, the code is intended to regulate the regulators”.

● (1745)

There is no regulation of the regulators in this particular bill. In fact, what the bill does is give the departmental bureaucrats, who visited upon the country the cod crisis of 1992 and who visited upon fisheries on the west coast the disaster of 2004, the ability to make regulations on the fly without public input and without the scrutiny of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. It gives them carte blanche to do what they want and to establish regulations as they see fit without any scrutiny whatsoever. For me, that goes beyond the pale.

*Government Orders*

I do not want to give the minister the power to have bureaucrats create regulatory offences without some safeguards; I am not prepared to simply turn over to fisheries bureaucrats the ability to make regulations governing the fishery without the appropriate scrutiny. I think that is wrong and I think that for this place to allow this to go forward is just outrageous. It is beyond the pale that the government would bring in a bill of this sort.

The citizens' code of regulatory fairness addresses this issue as well in point 6 of the code. It states that "the rules, sanctions, processes and actions of regulatory authorities will be securely founded in law".

If a bureaucrat can make regulations on the fly, where is the guarantee that those regulations would be securely founded in law? Where is it? Where is the scrutiny to see that in fact the regulations the bureaucrat is putting in place are regulations that were envisioned by this place when the Fisheries Act and its amendments were passed? It is not there.

Point 7 of the code states that "the government will ensure that officials responsible for developing, implementing or enforcing regulations are held accountable for their advice and actions".

Accountable? When have we ever held officials in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans accountable? Can anybody name one official in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans who was held accountable during the cod collapse on the east coast or during what went on last year on the west coast? The crisis last year was about the fourth we have had since 1992 and nobody has ever been held to account.

In fact, let us look at one of the latest newspaper headlines: "Ottawa pays officials \$32-million in bonuses". There is also a graph showing us that 223 of 237 executives at the fisheries and oceans department received bonuses totalling \$1.7 million. Those bonuses went to officials and executives of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans last year when those boys last year cost the economy of British Columbia probably \$70 or \$80 million, at a modest estimate, and maybe even as much as \$150 million, also a modest estimate, because of lost opportunities in the next cycle of the 2004 fishery. In other words, in 2008 the loss to the economy of British Columbia could total \$150 million, yet those guys received bonuses this year.

Where is the accountability? The citizens' code of regulatory fairness says that these bureaucrats should be held accountable. I do not see any accountability in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, none whatsoever. What I do see with Bill C-52 is the transference of this regulation making authority from the minister or from this place to a bureaucrat, without any scrutiny whatsoever, none, zero.

• (1750)

Nobody is standing there saying that this particular licence condition does not meet the demands or the expectations of the act. It simply says that the bureaucrat can put in place a condition and nobody has any right to challenge it.

If the issue is brought to court, the court would simply acknowledge that Parliament put that regulation in place and it gave that bureaucrat the authority to make that particular condition that is attached to the licence and nobody can do anything about it.

The court will simply acknowledge that the bureaucrat has the authority and it will do absolutely nothing to protect the fisherman who is hurt.

As I said to my colleague earlier, if a fisherman who is hurt by that particular piece of legislation comes to a member of Parliament, there is essentially nothing that we could do short of trying to obtain some change to the act to rein the authority of the bureaucrat, but nothing else could be done.

Not one member in this place should find any solace in this bill, nor should there be support for it. It is beyond the pale and my wildest imagination why anyone would want to give this authority to the bureaucrats who caused the destruction of the 2004 Fraser River sockeye run or who were directly responsible, in many ways, for failing to serve notice at the very least to government that there was a crisis in the cod fishery on the east coast before it was too late. Why would we want to give these bureaucrats authority to continue to act with licence? I do not know. I just plain do not understand it.

Bill C-52 would make it a criminal offence to break an unpublished secret law written by unaccountable bureaucrats.

Bill C-52 would put no limits on the nature and scope of the terms and conditions that can be imposed on fishermen.

Bill C-52 would put no limits on the penalty, the breach of every secret term or condition that is punishable by imprisonment. The penalty is not tailored to fit the crime.

Bill C-52 would remove the requirements to publish or make public the regulations.

There is no requirement in Bill C-52 that everyone in a fishery should face the same set of licence conditions. There is no requirement that every fisherman would face the same sets of terms and conditions to fish, so that the fishery then could be tailored and there could be different rules for different people.

Regulations under the Fisheries Act make those who write regulations accountable to Parliament as a whole and in particular the scrutiny for regulations committee, as well as the fisheries committee. In Bill C-52 neither the scrutiny for regulations committee nor the fisheries committee would ever see this new form of regulation. This is not a scheme of regulations that was ever intended by the Fisheries Act.

The Fisheries Act provides for open, public and accountable regulations. Bill C-52 would remove that. These amendments would undermine that scheme of open, public accountability that is built into the Fisheries Act. When regulations are created under the Fisheries Act, they are published prior to going into effect so that members of the public can comment on them.

• (1755)

That will not happen with these terms and conditions. When regulations are created under the Fisheries Act, a publicly available regulatory impact statement is a legal requirement. There is no such requirement for a term or condition as proposed under Bill C-52.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-52 is simply a way for the minister and the bureaucrats to regulate the fishery outside the requirements of the *Citizen's Code of Regulatory Fairness*. It would substitute the regulation of the fishery through public accountable regulations grounded in law and would substitute instead a scheme of regulations by unaccountable bureaucrats, all done behind closed doors.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions have taken place between all parties concerning the 41st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs affecting the list of members of the different standing committees. I believe that you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the 41st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be deemed tabled and concurred in without debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### FISHERIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, an act to amend the Fisheries Act (terms and conditions of permissions, leases and licences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I hope the minister and his officials were listening when the member just spoke because they would have received a much clearer understanding of the bill than we have seen from them today.

The bill itself is just a two clause bill, very short clauses in fact. The government would like us to believe that it is a minuscule bill with no problems and a slight change in regulations. We should rubber stamp it and send it on.

Let me ask my colleague, is it not a fact that the changes in these clauses not only affect the people of Ontario but people involved in the fishery right across the country? This is a major change which could have a very negative effect on everyone involved in every fishery in this country. That is my reading and from high authorities I am told that this is correct. That is not at all what we are hearing from the other side.

I would like the member's opinion on that. What effects will the changes in these regulations have on fishermen, for instance, in his area, a long way away from Ontario?

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my friend is absolutely correct. The bill does not just affect the Ontario regulations. In fact, when we look at the wording in the bill, it talks about everyone acting under the authority of a permission referred to in section 4 or of a lease or licence issued under this act that would comply with its terms and conditions. The bill applies coast to coast to coast. This is not an Ontario bill.

I have spoken with commercial fishermen in Ontario and they are uncomfortable with the bill because it gives the minister some authorities for which there is no accountability. That is the bottom line issue here. As I said, under the current act there is openness and transparency. The government is committed to publish these regulations in an open way. They must be published in the *Canada Gazette*. However, under this bill, there are no limits on the nature or scope of the terms of conditions that can apply or be imposed on fishermen. There are no limits on penalties that can be imposed and the bill would remove the requirement to publish or make public the licence conditions that would apply.

That is simply wrong and I cannot state it enough. I find amazing the audacity of a minority government to bring a bill such as this forward. What do the Liberals think we are? They thought they could rush it through. They brought it in last week thinking they would rush this baby through so fast that the opposition would not have time to look at it. Well some of us have been around a little while, like my colleagues from the Bloc and across the way from the NDP, and we have seen this stuff before. We know what these guys are up to and we will not tolerate it.

• (1800)

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I really regret the rhetoric of the member opposite because it is at least in part misleading the House. This bill contains an analogous provision to what was in the regulations.

The government introduced this bill because it was requested by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations and the member opposite knows it. He does not seem to be able to figure out why the bill is here. The bill is here because the committee requested it, even to the point of putting a disallowance motion on the table, which will be dealt with by the House later this week.

The member's assertion that regulations will not be published or scrutinized is nonsense. Regulations will be scrutinized in precisely the same way that this regulation was scrutinized.

I regret that he has taken this so personally. He might have taken an opportunity to advise the House that he himself was charged under the Fisheries Act. I believe he was charged and I stand corrected if I am wrong. He has a personal grievance and vendetta, and I regard that as a conflict of interest. I think he should have mentioned this to the House. I hope he will address that when he makes his remarks.

**An hon. member:** Apologize.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** I will not apologize for anything because it is a fact.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. John Cummins:** Madam Speaker, yes, I was charged under the Fisheries Act for protesting the heavy-handed and illegal regulations that the government has put forward.

In fact, the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, which the member sits on, found those same regulations to be illegal and advised the government that it lacked the internal fortitude to put a disallowance motion in the House because the committee at that time was dominated by Liberals who would not call their own government to account. That is the issue.

If the member can take a shot, I will take a shot. He is a lawyer and should know better. Perhaps if he was a good lawyer, he would be practising law rather than sitting here blathering on like he is doing right now.

Let us take a look at what the committee said. The committee said very clearly that the government can continue to operate the fishery without this particular provision. The committee made it very clear in a letter to the minister that its comments did not imply an endorsement of the amendments and said it could conceive that some parliamentarians might object to subjecting such non-compliance to penal sanctions that include imprisonment.

The committee went on to say that to deprive citizens of their liberty on the grounds that they have failed to abide by a requirement imposed by a public official in the exercise of an administrative power, such as a term or condition of licence, could be thought undesirable as a matter of legislative policy. I agree with the committee's statement. It is unfortunate that the member opposite does not.

• (1805)

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Madam Speaker, the member should be careful about putting words in my mouth. I actually agree with the contents of the letter sent by the committee. In fact, I think the committee was unanimous on this matter.

The committee was also unanimous that if the government introduced a bill such as is before the House now, it was prepared to withdraw, if it could, the disallowance motion currently on the table. The committee acted in a non-partisan way without personal interest in an effort to force the government to achieve the end being sought by this bill.

The member opposite continues to personalize this. It is his prerogative to do so if he wishes. As a member of that committee for a very long time, I can tell the House that the contents of this bill resolve completely the concerns of the committee in relation to the legality of the regulation. If members opposite do not want to see it that way, that is their prerogative.

However, in turning this into a partisan issue, because the committee has never made issues partisan and deals only with legality, he runs the risk of causing the committee to go off course and fail in its future work in scrutinizing the regulations made by the government on behalf of the House.

**Mr. John Cummins:** Madam Speaker, just in case the member opposite had not noticed, this is a partisan place. Government's job is to propose legislation. Our job on this side of the House is to find fault with it, if fault is there. We have found a very reasonable and legitimate fault with the bill. In fact the committee itself found this

fault with the bill and we concur with the committee's finding. It is as simple as that.

I did not personalize this debate. The member opposite did. My comment back to him was that if he wants to shoot that way, I can shoot back and I do not mind doing that. I would prefer not to, but I will and he ought to know that.

The committee also said, and this is what is particularly disturbing about it:

In the event the Houses agree to revoke this provision—

—and it is talking about 36(2) of the Ontario fisheries regulations—

—your Committee would expect this decision to form a precedent for the removal of similar provisions in other regulations under the Fisheries Act.

That is troubling.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there is a lot of shooting going on here, but let me take this opportunity to debate Bill C-52, an act to amend the Fisheries Act.

As has already been mentioned, the bill would add the following section after section 9:

Every one acting under the authority of a permission referred to in section 4 or of a lease or licence issued under this Act shall comply with its terms and conditions.

It goes on as well to add the clarification:

For greater certainty, those permissions, leases and licences — including their terms and conditions — are not statutory instruments for the purposes of the Statutory Instruments Act.

On the surface this seems to be a benign addition to the Fisheries Act. What could be wrong with stating that someone who is issued a licence, for example, is expected to comply with the licence's terms and conditions? It would appear to be the government's position that this is little more than a housekeeping measure. I am well aware of the fact that the government made every effort to try to get this passed at all stages.

In the few minutes that I have I will explain why in my opinion this is not benign, and why Parliament should proceed very carefully. In order to do that let me begin by providing a little important background.

Although it is true that the legislation has been presented with little or no advance notice, its genesis has been actually several years in the making. I will attempt to make a long story short.

The Ontario fishery regulations contain a regulation in section 36 (2) that provides the following:

No holder of a commercial fishing licence shall violate any of the terms or conditions of the licence.

Although it is stated negatively, one will notice that it is similar in substance to the bill that is before us today. As has already been pointed out, this regulation has troubled the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations for some time. In fact, this provision was dealt with by the committee in its second report in the second session of the 36th Parliament in 2000. It concluded:

The regulation not only lacks legal authority, but trespasses unduly on rights and liberties, and represents an unusual and unexpected use of the enabling authority.

Put simply, it was and is the position of the committee that regulations imposing sanctions or creating offences must be expressly authorized by Parliament. It is important to understand that because it is the same principle in play with the legislation before us today. Without this measure, a term or condition of a licence is not considered a provision of the act, so the violation of such a term or condition does not constitute a contravention of the act or regulations. However, the regulation in question in Bill C-52 makes it a legal responsibility to abide by the terms and conditions of a licence. It follows then that any contravention of those terms becomes a violation of the act and attracts the offence and punishment section of the Fisheries Act, section 78. The sanctions in that section are considerable so let me read them into the record:

an offence punishable on summary conviction and liable, for a first offence, to a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars and, for any subsequent offence, to a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to both; or

an indictable offence and liable, for a first offence, to a fine not exceeding five hundred thousand dollars and, for any subsequent offence, to a fine not exceeding five hundred thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both.

Those are pretty significant penalties, so we ought to be very careful here.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has continued to maintain that the questionable regulation is valid in spite of the continued disagreement of the scrutiny of regulations committee. It has argued in the past, for example, that the regulation merely imposes a standard of conduct or a requirement. The scrutiny of regulations committee concluded that the argument is best characterized as disingenuous.

In spite of the belief that the regulation was valid, the minister twice introduced a bill in the 37th Parliament that was intended to provide a legislative solution. Both died on the order paper.

To finally make a long story short, the scrutiny of regulations committee lost patience with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. On May 9 it issued a disallowance report to send a clear message that the offence-creating regulation was not authorized by the act and the process to have it revoked was started. That appeared to catch the attention of the minister and he finally introduced the bill that is before us today.

• (1810)

An obvious question is, does this solve the legal problems highlighted by the scrutiny of regulations committee? In fact, the committee was asked that very question when similar legislation was introduced in the last Parliament. The committee answered unequivocally, "We are pleased to confirm that the proposed amendments would, if adopted, remove the basis for the joint committee's objections".

That is the good news. I do not think anyone disagrees that this bill will solve the minister's legal problems. However, and this is the crucial point, that does not mean Bill C-52 is good legislation. In fact, the standing joint committee recognized that other important issues need to be addressed. In that same letter from which I just quoted, the committee went on to add:

Our acknowledgment that amendments included in Bill C-43 —

### *Government Orders*

—the bill number in the last Parliament—

—would resolve the Committee's objections to the legality of the relevant regulatory provisions does not imply an endorsement of those amendments. Particularly as regards the proposed section 10(1), which would impose a legal duty to comply with the terms and conditions of the licence, we can conceive that some parliamentarians might object to subjecting such non-compliance to penal sanctions that include imprisonment. To deprive a citizen of his liberty on the ground that the citizen has failed to abide by a requirement imposed by a public official in the exercise of administrative power, such as a term or condition of a licence, could be thought undesirable as a matter of legislative policy.

In fact, that is the question before us. As parliamentarians, do we object, do we find it undesirable that non-compliance of a requirement imposed by a public employee in the exercise of an administrative power can result in penal sanctions that could include imprisonment? I do not know about you, Madam Speaker, but when I go to jail, I prefer it to be for violating a law that has been passed by a parliament or for contravening a regulation that has been subjected to thorough scrutiny.

I am one of those parliamentarians that objects to putting this kind of arbitrary power in the hands of a public official.

Let me mention as well that I have the duty of being on both the fisheries committee and the scrutiny of regulations committee. Contrary to the way the member for Scarborough—Rouge River has recalled it, yes, we agreed that if this bill was passed it would address the concern of the committee regarding the legality. I did not hear any agreement to revoking that regulation.

Even in our last meeting we expressed the problems that were addressed in this letter. Yes, this solves the minister's legal problems and we know he knows that he has a problem. We still have a legislative policy issue that we need to resolve.

The government appears to be quite committed to getting this bill passed. The Liberals must believe it is important. In fact, as has been quoted already, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans sent a letter to the joint chairs of the scrutiny of regulations committee on April 19. In the letter he referred to a letter that he had received from the Ontario minister of natural resources. In that letter the minister sent to the committee he said:

As you will see in Minister Ramsay's letter, revoking subsection 36(2) of the OFR [Ontario fisheries regulations] would have severe negative implications on Ontario's commercial fishery and threaten sustainability of Ontario's fisheries resources. In transmitting Minister Ramsay's letter I would like to impress upon the committee that revoking subsection 36(2) of the OFR would have serious negative effects on fisheries conservation and management in Ontario. I would also like to re-emphasize my intention to carry out a broader renewal —

• (1815)

The letter from Minister Ramsay went on to state:

Terms and conditions are currently the only mechanisms by which Ontario can establish allowable quota, areas where fishing can occur, designates who can take fish under a licence, reporting for commercial fishing licences. Without this provision, Ontario would literally have its hands tied with respect to enforcement of the commercial fishery. It is entirely likely that the revocation of subsection 36(2) would result in chaos in this sector and threaten the sustainability of our fisheries resources.

Of course, this is the threat the minister wants to leave before us. He will probably tell us on Wednesday that if we revoke the regulation and defeat the legislation we will be left with chaos in Ontario and, maybe by extension, elsewhere in the country. That, I think, is to misunderstand the situation a little.

*Government Orders*

The scrutiny of regulations committee responded to that in its most recent report. It states:

In closing, the Committee wishes to briefly address the statement by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources that:

I just quoted that statement. The report goes on to say:

To the extent this comment suggests that disallowance of section 36(2) would impair the ability to impose terms and conditions of licences, it does not reflect a clear understanding of the nature of section 36(2). Disallowance of that section may change the manner of enforcing compliance with terms and conditions of licences, but would certainly not affect in any way the ability to impose such terms and conditions.

We need to ask and answer what remedies would be left to the government if the legislation is defeated, as I think it should be. As the letter has pointed out, the mechanism of imposing those terms and conditions is still there. It is another question whether the department should have that ability to impose those but it still does under the current Fisheries Act.

The government would still have the ability to impose these terms and conditions but what will the mechanisms be to enforce those? Under the act it still has the power to revoke or cancel a licence. I understand that the minister does not like that option but that is an option left open to him.

Another option, which has been mentioned in more detail by my colleague from Delta—Richmond East, is that we could expect the ministry, if it wants to regulate the industry, to put forth its regulations. It should go through the process, those things that are subject to the Statutory Instruments Act and gazette them. It should tell fishermen what they can expect if they sign on to these licences, what the terms and conditions will be and what they can expect if they violate these conditions.

This appears to me to be flawed legislation. The unintended consequences could be enormous. If I were a fisherman, I would be very concerned about this and I know many of them are. On behalf of many fishermen in my riding of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, I will be voting against this.

• (1820)

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the remarks by the member opposite have been helpful. We may not agree on all elements but I do want to recall for him, because he said that he could not remember an agreement or understanding at the committee involving what might happen if the government introduced legislation such as this, and read the words of the member of his own party who was in the chair at the time we discussed it. The chairman said:

We have another...meeting on June 2. Until then, we will keep the communication channel open and watch to see if any legislation is on its way or being introduced... In case we have to withdraw that disallowance report in lieu of the assurance that we will get, then probably we can talk with each other and the House leaders to seek unanimous consent to withdraw, if we can.

The issue, therefore, was clearly discussed and a consensus was reached to consider the withdrawal of the disallowance motion if the legislation was introduced. I am very disappointed that his party is not prepared to support the legislation as introduced. In fact, I suggest an implication of this non-support, even from members of the standing joint committee in that party, is to undermine the disallowance process.

If this position persists, I suppose I and perhaps the other Liberals and who knows, other members of the committee, will have to take a different view of the disallowance matter when it comes forward. That can only impair the future work of the standing joint committee and I very much regret the position taken by members opposite.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Scarborough—Rouge River for that reminder but if he were to continue on reading the transcripts he would come to the place where the chairman of the fisheries and oceans committee brought to our attention in our very last meeting that the minister was bringing forward this legislation. In the meeting that the member refers to we had no legislation before us to know what it might be or what it might say. We knew it might solve the legality issues but I assumed we would still have to face the policy issues.

He would know that in the very next meeting the chairman of the committee encouraged us to go to our House leaders to see if we could get this run through the House at all stages with little or actually no debate. When that suggestion was made to us as committee members he will remember that at least one member, myself, raised the concern that there would be policy issues that we in this party might not find acceptable. If other parties did I guess that would be up to them. However it did not sound like good policy to me which is why we are here today.

• (1825)

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a little late in the day on this but we asked the Library of Parliament to see if it could find similar provisions to what the government is proposing in Bill C-52. It found similar provisions in only two other statutes, one regulating nuclear facilities and the other regulating airlines. Both have regulations by public regulatory tribunals, not secret regulation abilities by federal bureaucrats.

This particular bill is away out there when it comes to anything that has ever been passed by the House. The House has never given that sort of authority to anyone.

I know it is late in the day and I am springing it on my good friend but I wonder if he would care to comment on that. As I said, there are only two similar statutes and both of those have public regulatory tribunals governing them.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Madam Speaker, I do not have much to say except to thank my hon. colleague for that information. As I was preparing to speak to this, that was precisely the question I was wondering about.

The government, in its little single page document that it finally distributed at the 11th hour, which I just saw this morning for the very first time, to give us reasons why we should support the bill did not mention anything about that and whether this was a normal approach to doing business.

It occurred to me that it probably was not, otherwise the government would have given us some support for that. I can understand why it is not and I appreciate the hon. member for giving me that information.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Madam Speaker, having to sit through this all day, I know you are now very familiar with some of the fishery problems throughout the country and, heaven knows, we might have our first female minister of fisheries very soon. I think I could say that would probably be an improvement.

My colleague, who is quite familiar with some of the fishing problems in his province, knows full well that there are some extremely serious issues facing the country. We have spent all afternoon dealing with a two clause bill. People might ask why we would spend so much time. It is simply because that little two clause bill would have a major effect on every fisherperson in this country. Every species that is fished and the people who fish them would be affected if the legislation came into place, which is why we had to bring this out.

I would like my colleague to comment on the fact that there are other major issues that are never debated in this House. It is amazing. It is only when we have questions, although we never get clear answers from the minister. At times it is frustrating to know that we have problems on the west coast with the salmon fishery and numerous fisheries. We have problems on the east coast and all kinds of problems in between. Yet, except for the standing committee, a tremendous standing committee where a lot of these issues are discussed, seldom do we hear the fishery issue being debated in the House. The only time we see the minister give anybody the opportunity is when some seemingly minuscule bill comes in that they try to ram through. As my colleague from Delta—Richmond East said earlier, this is something that we are aware of, and the Bloc and the NDP have caught on to the fact that this is extremely important legislation.

I just wonder if the member, in the 30 seconds he has left, would tell us whether or not we should be debating other important issues concerning the fisheries.

• (1830)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Madam Speaker, yes, there is a lot of work to be done and certainly we on this side of the House and those of us in British Columbia are well aware of this, and I am sure in Newfoundland as well.

Let me just say that I take my role here pretty seriously and one of the questions I always ask myself when looking at any legislation is whether it is clear that it has been significantly thought through to be confident that there are no unintended consequences.

I have asked myself about this and the answer is no, I am not confident and I need to vote against it.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

### FISHERIES

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans a question in the House

of Commons on May 30. The parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development responded to that question.

The Speaker was in the Chair on that day. My question was as follows:

Mr. Speaker, in 2003, the Gullyfish processing plant in Shippagan was destroyed by arson. In 2004, the Oceanis plant in Shippagan closed. Now the Bluecove plant in Maissonnette has just closed. Since 2003, over 600 employees have been affected.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Will the minister implement a program to help the employees at least qualify for employment insurance, or set up an early retirement program, or will he wash his hands of this and leave these employees and their families penniless?

I must admit that I was extremely pleased by the parliamentary secretary's answer, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, we are always very concerned when people become unemployed and when large numbers of people in a region become unemployed. The Department of HRSD provides assistance to employees and employers when something like this occurs. Our officials go to the premises concerned, or to a mutually agreed to site, and they help employees apply for EI. The federal government is helping in this case.

I asked my question last week. Will something be done for the people working in the fish processing plants in the Acadian Peninsula and the Petit-Rocher region? I am getting calls from all these people who are working in the fish processing plants in the Chaleur Bay region. Is the federal government prepared to help these workers?

Today alone, I got thirty calls from employees who did not have enough hours to qualify for EI benefits.

The parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development was very clear in his reply. He indicated that there were programs in place. He clearly boasted of his intention to help out the affected workers. Since the question was asked, we have yet to hear anything about the kind of help that will be forthcoming for the workers who have not accumulated enough hours to qualify for EI benefits.

There is another problem as well. If people do not qualify for EI now, next year these same people will have to have 910 hours because of the 1996 changes before they will be eligible. Yet last week the government said it would be helping workers in this kind of situation.

Now that the government has stated that clearly in the House of Commons, I would like to know whether it is prepared, and when it will have a plan for helping those who cannot accumulate enough hours to qualify for EI?

I am expecting the parliamentary secretary, who is going to answer my question this evening, to also be able to cast some light for us on his answer of last week. Perhaps he will tell us that the Liberal government is not helping the workers, or that it is only helping those who are in certain parts of the country. Or maybe he will tell us that the government is going to treat everyone the same way, and that it is prepared to help those who are out of work and in dire straits.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1835)

[English]

**Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I can only repeat the fact that the Government of Canada is always concerned when a large number of employees are laid off, whether a company closes or whether a company burns down. As always, our goal is to help Canadian workers to get back to work and to provide the employees with interim measures as quickly as possible.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada provides assistance to employees as well as employers when a mass layoff takes place. HRSDC officials go to the employers' premises or a mutually agreed upon site, as I said, to help employees apply for employment insurance and process claims as quickly as possible.

Employers are invited to provide application information for affected employees to Human Resources Centre Canada. This streamlines and accelerates the processing of claims. Employees are also provided with information on programs and services available to help them get back to work.

Procedures for large scale or mass layoffs are usually developed based on regional or local needs. When employment insurance claims are filed with record of employment information directly from the employer, the department can finalize them without delays. If records of employment are not available at the time of the on-site information claims-taking session, the employer may be requested to retain the applications and send them to the local office with records of employment.

The department also has an automated program designed to help local offices and employers handle a mass layoff. The program facilitates the management and processing of mass layoff claims electronically. Employers provide a list of social insurance numbers of affected employees and the program automatically completes most of the data required on the application for employment insurance benefits. The applications are then printed and sent to the employer which will give them to the affected employees or bring them when taking the group application for benefits.

We recognize the fact that when massive layoffs occur there are often economic impacts on the community and the families of affected employees. As always, our goal is to assist workers to get back to work as soon as possible.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Madam Speaker, frankly, I cannot believe my eyes or my ears.

That was definitely not the question I asked last week. Following the closure of fish plants in the Acadian peninsula, I am asking the federal government whether it plans, through some programs, to help those affected accumulate enough hours of work to qualify for employment insurance.

Last week, in response to my question, the parliamentary secretary said that human resources officials would be helping the workers fill in their EI forms. People do not fill in the EI forms if they have not worked the required number of hours.

I asked the government if programs would be implemented to help the workers or if they could take early retirement, to get out of the fisheries industry. I am getting the same answer today as I was given last week. The Liberals missed the point. They would need experts to explain the situation to them. They should come and meet the people in the field.

I would like an answer from the government. Will programs be implemented to help workers accumulate enough hours of work to qualify for employment insurance, yes or no?

• (1840)

[English]

**Hon. Peter Adams:** Madam Speaker, I described the general case as well as I could.

With respect to the Blue Cove Packing Plant in Anse-Bleue, New Brunswick, which closed recently, the local HRCC staff has communicated with the company officials to offer the services and assistance of the department. The manager has indicated that this is not a permanent closure but only a temporary setback. It is the lobster production which will be affected and it could be back up and running as early as next week or as late as July.

The local HRCC staff have put forth all the necessary services to assist the affected employees.

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak again on behalf of my constituents about the Windsor-Detroit border. For Canadians tuning in, about 42% of the nation's traffic and trade to the United States is crammed along two kilometres. What a lot of people do not know is that a private American citizen owns the Ambassador Bridge which controls just over one-third of the international trade between Canada and the United States. It is a bridge with two lanes in each direction and the government has no authority over it.

There have been competing interests to get a new border crossing from the private sector. Out of 24 international crossings between Canada and the United States, 22 are publicly held. There is only the Ambassador Bridge and another small one that is privately owned.

I asked the Prime Minister a question about the community from which claims to come. I asked if he would commit to a new public border crossing agency. We need some type of authority over the whole region to ensure that the four crossings, two tunnels, one bridge and a ferry service have some oversight, jurisdiction, review and accountability especially as we have a lot of security issues with the United States.

On the private infrastructure, industry and individuals are being hosed by some of the highest fares and the least accountable. The Prime Minister ditched the question again to the Minister of Transport, who basically stated:

—if the hon. member wants to be helpful, we have now a project before the committee on the Canada Transportation Act that will deal with international crossings and will help in the governance of international crossings.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

That has not been tabled in the House of Commons. It is not even in committee. The member for Churchill is on that committee and has not seen it. Most important, it does not address the question. I was asking for a public border authority. Will the government create a jurisdictional oversight authority, similar to what Sarnia has just down the road from us, similar to what Fort Erie has, another part of southwestern Ontario, and similar to what Niagara Falls has?

The most important border crossing has no structure to help with the governance. There is nothing to oversee safety, new regulations and the costs. The government could take a position and at least say whether it supports a border authority for the most important crossing in Canada.

The ferry operator, who is a private American citizen as well, has welcomed this notion. Since 9/11, he has never been approached by anyone from the government to find out who he is as an individual or to check his background. Meanwhile hundreds of trucks cross on his ferry system per week with toxic materials, chemicals and different kinds of goods that have to cross the river in a safe format. He welcomes this jurisdictional oversight and accountability. That has yet to happen. That is madness. We have a bridge that acts as a lifeline to the Canadian economy with absolutely no oversight.

Last, why can the Minister of Transport not come forward and say that he supports a public border authority for the community of Windsor like we have elsewhere in southern Ontario?

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the future ownership of the Detroit River crossing. Before getting to this specific issue, I would like to explain the work that is being done by the governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario and Michigan under the umbrella of the Border Transportation Partnership.

The binational partnership was officially launched in 2001 to develop a long term strategy to improve in a coordinated fashion the movement of people, goods and services across the Windsor-Detroit gateway. This is also commonly referred as the binational process.

The partnership was established in recognition of the urgent need to find a way to coordinate and streamline three different legislated environmental assessment requirements: the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; the Ontario environmental assessment act; and the national environmental protection act of the United States of America. This was done in order to identify a common solution for additional crossing capacity.

We have now entered the formal environmental assessment phase of the binational study process for increasing crossing capacity. The governments of Canada and Ontario have announced several initiatives to address cross-border transportation needs over the short and medium term until the new capacity is available.

The environmental assessment phase is expected to last three years, at which time the partnership will have concluded consultations and developed a preliminary design and plan for the expanded border capacity. Construction will begin in 2010, leading to the opening of additional capacity by the end of 2013.

While this timeline seems very long and is a source of frustration to many stakeholders, I would like to assure members that having

this additional crossing capacity operational by the end of 2013 is a priority of the binational partnership. We are taking every step necessary to meet this target.

The binational partnership is considering the governance model for new crossing capacity. The partnership is looking at various governance models and accountability frameworks. We are reviewing and analyzing a number of models ranging from private to public sector ownership and operation.

Through the collaborative development of possible governance models, the four governments will be in a position to move quickly toward implementation, regardless of which corridor is selected during the environmental assessment process.

To complement the impending construction of a new or expanded crossing in the Windsor-Detroit corridor and elsewhere, such as the St. Stephen-Calais border crossing between New Brunswick and Maine, Transport Canada is also pursuing new provisions to the Canada Transportation Act relating to international bridges and tunnels.

There are presently 24 international bridges and tunnels between Canada and the United States. Historically, it has been standard practice to introduce special acts of Parliament for the approval and construction of each new international structure. This is a lengthy process and has resulted in a lack of consistency in the governance of the various bridges.

Currently, our international bridges are governed in some cases by crown corporations, international bridge authorities, or by a U.S. authority on the American side and a provincial department of transportation on the Canadian side. As well, two international bridges are privately owned and one is owned by a municipality.

The proposed amendments to the Canada Transportation Act, along with the examination of various governance models and accountability frameworks, will help us move seamlessly from the environmental assessment phase to the design, property acquisition and construction phases of the Detroit River crossing project. These actions will ensure that local, provincial and national interests are protected.

● (1845)

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member still did not address the answer of the minister. The minister told the House that we were dealing with this issue at committee when we are not. It is not at committee. He did not even answer that question, and the Liberals wonder why people get upset about what happens in the House of Commons.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The binational planning process is fine in the sense that we can throw everything back there and just wait to see what happens. In fact the Liberals are actually scurrying and changing their practices. The minister's department is getting a nice reputation in the United States as actually being the one holding back the process. In fact the Liberals are so out of step with Michigan that two lawmakers in Michigan, and I have the bill, have introduced a public border authority for the Windsor-Detroit border on the Michigan side because of the lack of commitment on our side. They have also introduced public ownership. They are taking steps. So I have I. I have tabled two similar motions today to complement their efforts.

Why is it the Minister of Transport could not take a position of public authority, a simple thing? I suppose it would require his leadership.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Madam Speaker, certainly my hon. colleague knows that we just do not wake up one morning and say we are going to take ownership. Certainly my hon. colleague is not suggesting that we jump in with both feet and say that we are going to disregard any governance and any authority whatsoever that needs

to be done in environmental assessment. I certainly hope my hon. colleague is not suggesting that we do things in a haphazard way.

This government is taking all the necessary steps. Environmental assessments are being done. We are talking to all stakeholders. We do not have to deal with only one government but four. Two legislatures in the United States do not make the United States and/or Michigan, and they do not talk for all of the United States or Michigan.

There is a plan of action that looks right across our borders to what we are doing with the United States. This plan of action has been tabled in the House in Bill C-44. When it comes to second reading stage, I welcome the opportunity to discuss it with my colleague.

● (1850)

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** 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 6:50 p.m.)

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# CONTENTS

Monday, June 6, 2005

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Foreign Credential Recognition Program

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Motion .....                      | 6633 |
| Ms. Bonsant .....                 | 6633 |
| Ms. Oda .....                     | 6634 |
| Mr. Siksay .....                  | 6635 |
| Mr. Adams .....                   | 6637 |
| Ms. Dhalla .....                  | 6638 |
| Division on motion deferred ..... | 6639 |
| Mr. LeBlanc .....                 | 6639 |

### Suspension of Sitting

|   |      |
|---|------|
| (The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:50 a.m.) .. | 6639 |
|---|------|

### Sitting Resumed

|   |      |
|---|------|
| (The House resumed at 12:03 p.m.) ..... | 6639 |
|---|------|

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Department of Social Development Act

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Bill C-22. Third reading .....             | 6639 |
| Mrs. Gallant .....                         | 6639 |
| Mr. Savage .....                           | 6640 |
| Mr. Murphy .....                           | 6642 |
| Ms. Minna .....                            | 6642 |
| Ms. Demers .....                           | 6644 |
| Ms. Gagnon (Québec) .....                  | 6646 |
| Mr. Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain) ..... | 6646 |
| Mr. Boire .....                            | 6647 |
| Ms. Demers .....                           | 6649 |
| Mr. Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse) .....     | 6650 |
| Mr. Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain) ..... | 6650 |
| Mr. Ianno .....                            | 6652 |
| Mr. Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain) ..... | 6653 |
| Ms. Demers .....                           | 6653 |

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Job Finding Club

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Ms. Phinney ..... | 6654 |
|-------------------|------|

### Rural Post Offices

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Mr. Harrison ..... | 6654 |
|--------------------|------|

### Jean-Marc Filion

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Mr. Rota ..... | 6654 |
|----------------|------|

### Sustainable Development

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Ms. Bonsant ..... | 6654 |
|-------------------|------|

### Senator Isobel Finnerty

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Ms. Neville ..... | 6655 |
|-------------------|------|

### Newfoundland and Labrador

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Mr. Hearn ..... | 6655 |
|-----------------|------|

### Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Mr. Godbout ..... | 6655 |
|-------------------|------|

### Léonard Brisson

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| Mr. Cleary ..... | 6655 |
|------------------|------|

### Municipalities

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| Mr. Powers ..... | 6655 |
|------------------|------|

### Alternative Energy

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Mr. Menzies ..... | 6656 |
|-------------------|------|

### Canadian Forces

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) ..... | 6656 |
|---|------|

### Arts and Culture

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis ..... | 6656 |
|--------------------------|------|

### Astronomy

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Mr. Rajotte ..... | 6656 |
|-------------------|------|

### Bernard Landry

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| Ms. Bourgeois ..... | 6656 |
|---------------------|------|

### China

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| Mr. Duncan ..... | 6657 |
|------------------|------|

### Member for Labrador

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Mr. Simms ..... | 6657 |
|-----------------|------|

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### New Member

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| The Speaker ..... | 6657 |
|-------------------|------|

### New Member Introduced

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Mr. Todd Norman Russell (Labrador) ..... | 6657 |
|--|------|

### Inquiry by Ethics Commissioner

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| The Speaker ..... | 6657 |
|-------------------|------|

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### Taxation

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Mr. MacKay .....  | 6657 |
| Mr. Goodale ..... | 6658 |
| Mr. MacKay .....  | 6658 |
| Mr. Goodale ..... | 6658 |
| Mr. MacKay .....  | 6658 |
| Mr. Goodale ..... | 6658 |

### The Budget

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Mr. Solberg ..... | 6658 |
| Mr. Goodale ..... | 6658 |
| Mr. Solberg ..... | 6658 |
| Mr. Goodale ..... | 6658 |

### Audiotaped Conversations

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Duceppe .....                | 6658 |
| Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) ..... | 6659 |
| Mr. Duceppe .....                | 6659 |
| Mr. Valeri .....                 | 6659 |
| Mr. Duceppe .....                | 6659 |
| Ms. McLellan .....               | 6659 |
| Mr. Duceppe .....                | 6659 |



|  |      |
|--|------|
| (Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....                                       | 6669 |
| <b>Bank Act</b>  |      |
| Ms. Blondin-Andrew (for the Minister of Finance) .....   | 6669 |
| Bill C-57. Introduction and first reading .....  | 6670 |
| (Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....                                       | 6670 |
| <b>Committees of the House</b>   |      |
| <b>Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness</b>                                     |      |
| Mr. Maloney .....  | 6670 |
| <b>Health</b>  |      |
| Mr. Merrifield .....   | 6670 |
| <b>Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities</b> |      |
| Mr. Adams .....  | 6670 |
| <b>PETITIONS</b>   |      |
| <b>Marriage</b>  |      |
| Mr. Johnston .....   | 6670 |
| Mr. Szabo .....  | 6670 |
| <b>Rural Post Offices</b>  |      |
| Mrs. Skelton .....   | 6670 |
| <b>Marijuana</b>   |      |
| Mrs. Skelton .....   | 6670 |
| <b>Community Access Program</b>  |      |
| Mr. Sorenson .....   | 6671 |
| <b>Marriage</b>  |      |
| Mr. Goodyear .....   | 6671 |
| <b>Capital Punishment</b>  |      |
| Mr. MacKenzie .....  | 6671 |
| <b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>  |      |
| Mr. LeBlanc .....  | 6671 |
| <b>Points of Order</b>   |      |
| <b>Bill C-280—Employment Insurance Act</b>   |      |
| Mr. LeBlanc .....  | 6671 |
| Mr. Hearn .....  | 6672 |
| <b>GOVERNMENT ORDERS</b>   |      |
| <b>Fisheries Act</b>   |      |
| Mr. Regan .....  | 6672 |

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Bill C-52. Second reading ..... | 6672 |
| Mr. Cummins .....               | 6673 |
| Mr. Lee .....                   | 6674 |
| Mr. Cummins .....               | 6675 |
| Mr. Hearn .....                 | 6676 |
| Mr. LeBlanc .....               | 6678 |
| Mr. Van Loan .....              | 6679 |
| Mr. Murphy .....                | 6679 |
| Mr. Roy .....                   | 6680 |
| Mr. Cummins .....               | 6681 |
| Ms. Crowder .....               | 6682 |
| Mr. Cummins .....               | 6684 |

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Committees of the House

#### Procedure and House Affairs

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mrs. Redman .....        | 6687 |
| Motion .....             | 6687 |
| (Motion agreed to) ..... | 6687 |

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Fisheries Act

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Bill C-52. Second reading ..... | 6687 |
| Mr. Hearn .....                 | 6687 |
| Mr. Cummins .....               | 6687 |
| Mr. Lee .....                   | 6687 |
| Mr. Kamp .....                  | 6688 |
| Mr. Lee .....                   | 6690 |
| Mr. Cummins .....               | 6690 |
| Mr. Hearn .....                 | 6691 |

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

### Fisheries

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Mr. Godin ..... | 6691 |
| Mr. Adams ..... | 6692 |

### Canada-U.S. Border

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Mr. Masse .....       | 6692 |
| Mr. Karygiannis ..... | 6693 |

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