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**Friday, February 18, 1994**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 18, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

(1005)

Prayers

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CUSTOMS TARIFF

**Hon. Douglas Peters (for the Minister of Finance)** moved that Bill C-5, an act to amend the customs tariff, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce for consideration by the House Bill C-5, an act to amend the customs tariff.

The legislation I am introducing today seeks to extend the general preferential tariff, commonly referred to as the GPT, for another 10 years. The GPT is a tariff preference granted to developing countries for goods originating in those countries.

Let me give some of the history of this preferential tariff. In the mid-1960s there was widespread recognition that special and differential tariff treatment for developing countries was a means of fostering growth and well-being of those nations. Consequently in 1968 it was agreed at the United Nations conference on trade and development that a system of trade preferences should be implemented for developing countries.

In June 1971 this decision was accepted by Canada and other signatories to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Members of the GATT agreed that developing countries would be permitted to award more favourable treatment to products imported from developing countries than to similar products from developed countries. It was also agreed that the preferential tariff would be generalized, non-discriminatory and non-reciprocal.

Canada introduced its general preferential tariff scheme on July 1, 1974 for a 10-year period. The GPT was subsequently extended for another 10 years until June 30, 1994.

With this history in mind I would like to outline for the benefit of the House some of the essential features of the GPT. The GPT provides for a reduction in tariffs of up to one-third of the most favoured nation rates on certain types of goods from developing countries.

In the case of the least developed developing countries, that is the poorest countries known as the LDDCs, the tariff reduction is even larger. These countries are entitled to duty free treatment on all of their GPT eligible exports to Canada.

In all, more than 180 countries and territories are entitled to zero or low tariffs on a wide range of products, primarily manufactured and semi-manufactured goods.

In order for particular items to qualify for GPT they must comply with the rules of origin and other regulations. More particularly goods would only qualify for the GPT if at least 60 per cent of the factory price of the goods exported to Canada originated from one or more GPT countries. In the case of the LDDCs, the poorest countries, the content requirement is 40 per cent.

In order to ensure that GPT products do not have an adverse impact on Canadian producers, a safeguard system is authorized by the Minister of Finance to withdraw GPT treatment for particular goods.

The question before us is simple: Should the GPT be extended? It is the government's view that the GPT should be continued. The legislation I have tabled proposes to extend the GPT for another 10 years to the year 2004. The government's decision to extend the GPT is being made at a time when most developed nations have already extended their preferential tariff schemes. In other words we are in the mainstream.

The reasons which justified the introduction of the GPT 20 years ago still remain. While the GPT has supported growth in the export sectors of many developing countries, they still have a long way to go. Indeed many developing countries still need preferential access to the markets of the developed world in order to improve their economic status. By allowing developing countries preferential access we continue Canada's tradition of assisting the developing world. Moreover, the massive weight of evidence from 50 years of trade liberalization supports the principle that export expansion contributes to general economic growth.

The GPT does not only benefit developing countries. As a result of lower tariffs on goods from the developing world, Canadian consumers enjoy access to imported goods at competitive prices. Also Canadian producers who rely on goods from GPT countries as inputs also benefit from the reduced tariff. Accordingly the GPT contributed to the economic development

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of the beneficiary countries while allowing Canadians to benefit as well.

At the same time, and as noted earlier, in order to ensure that goods from GPT countries do not injure domestic producers, there exist legislative and quasi-judicial mechanisms for withdrawing GPT status to goods that are injurious to domestic producers. I wish to assure the House that where a reduced tariff injures Canadian producers, the government can move to disqualify such goods from the lower tariff. For example, rubber footwear and rubber inner tubes have for a number of years been excluded from the GPT scheme under temporary safeguard measures recommended by the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. The government has now decided to remove these products permanently from the scheme.

Finally, in recent years we have seen considerable change in the international economic and trade situation. Many developing countries are now enjoying significant economic growth while others need more assistance because their economic situation has deteriorated over the past several years. We have recently ratified NAFTA and the Uruguay round of the GATT has just recently concluded. These trade arrangements will result in reduced tariffs on many products. These changes have significant implications for the GPT.

I also wish to tell the House that the government is studying the ramifications of these developments with a view of making changes to the GPT tariff structure in the next year or so. The objective is to make the GPT an even better tool to assist the developing world. During this year consultations will be held with interested parties on possible expansion of GPT product coverage and reduction of GPT rates, particularly for the least developed countries. In addition, we will be examining the desirability of maintaining the GPT for those countries that have already achieved the high level of economic development.

(1010)

To conclude I call on all members of the House to support this bill. Such support will show Canada continues to contribute to economic growth within the developing world.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may start by greeting my colleague, the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions, who tabled this bill on January 31 on behalf of the Minister of Finance. Aside from the debate on the motion presented by the Reform Party last week, when I had the pleasure of making a presentation which dealt partly with international financial institutions, and in fact just before the secretary of state gave his speech, this is the first time he and I will have an opportunity to work together in the House.

He will be pleased to hear that we are probably on the same wave length regarding the general implications of the bill before the House today, and I hope this will be only the first of many such occasions.

I would now like to comment more directly on Bill C-5 which the House is being asked to consider and on the context that makes it so important, namely, export development assistance for developing countries.

This is a very short bill. It contains only one section, whose purpose is to extend for ten years—until June 30, 2004—the expiry date for the general preferential tariff applied by Canada to developing countries. Since the various provisions of the GPT have already been explained in detail by the secretary of state, I do not think I have anything to add in that respect. The bill amends section 45 of the Customs Tariff, under which the GPT was to expire on June 30 this year.

However, the government reserves the right to change subsequently, by order of the Governor in Council, the expiry date of the extension, the rate of duty provided under the GPT and the treatment given certain goods and certain countries.

Although not impressive in size, Bill C-5 has a considerable impact through what it actually does.

I may recall that in the early seventies Canada, like all industrialized countries, introduced preferential tariff treatment for developing countries. The purpose of this measure was to promote the economic growth of these countries by developing their trade with Canada.

Every 10 years, parliamentarians are asked to consider another ten-year extension for a measure that costs little and provides a form of indirect aid to developing countries. In this respect, the Bloc Québécois reiterates its support for measures that promote international development.

The provisions of this bill ultimately provide an attractive market for the products of developing countries, removing the dependency that conventional development aid will sometimes create. This is positive aid that helps these countries develop goods for export and promotes their integration and participation in international trade, which is expected to intensify in the years to come. That is why the Official Opposition intends to support this bill.

Canada has acquired an excellent reputation for development assistance, through the expertise and activities of non-governmental organizations dedicated to international development. We must continue this tradition, and I want to take this opportunity to say that a sovereign Quebec will be guided by the same concern for international equity.

*Government Orders*

All of us have been exposed, from time to time, to the usual series of statistics that point to wide gaps in economic development and in the availability of basic resources ensuring a minimum quality of life, which is the case in many countries on this planet. More than one billion people or one-fifth of the world's population earn less than one U.S. dollar per day, comparable to a wage level that existed in Europe and the United States at the end of the eighteenth century. In the eighties, the per capita income of developing countries in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa declined, in real terms.

However, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and there are some indications that development programs can produce substantial positive results.

(1015)

The average per capita income in developing countries, for example, has doubled over the last three decades, which is a rate of growth higher than in Great Britain during the industrial revolution, or in the United States in the 19th century, or even in Japan between the two world wars. Turkey, for instance, doubled its per capita income over a period of 20 years, from 1957 to 1977. Brazil made it in 18 years, from 1961 to 1979; South Korea in 11 years, from 1966 to 1977; and China in 10 years, from 1977 to 1987.

Infant mortality has been reduced by half and life expectancy has been pushed ahead 10 years on average. A child born in Shanghai is less likely to die before reaching one year of age and more likely to learn how to read and to live longer than a child born in New York.

Despite these very encouraging statistics, major differences and unacceptable inequalities continue to exist and in some cases to increase. It is therefore necessary to maintain our efforts in order to promote development in the countries which do not enjoy the great conditions we have here.

Clearly, magic formulas to achieve development in the Third World exist by the million.

Just think of the drastic measures advocated by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund in order to bring structural changes to the macro-economic policies of these countries, even though they are very often accompanied by a worsening of already serious social problems.

Some experts insist on growth of local savings, while others favour a massive involvement of government in some sectors of the economy.

Others advise a total or partial closing off of the country to imports, in order to generate economic growth from the inside.

Finally, there are some who believe that opening the economies of developing countries to the world is, in the long run, the best way to achieve development. The abolition or reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers and the adoption of measures to promote exports would be some of the roads to development.

Such measures would only ensure these countries do not remain mere observers of this tremendous phenomenon called market globalization. As for us, we must realize that we have everything to gain from a reduction of the dependence of these countries and from their involvement in, and contribution to the increasing world trade.

Therefore, I believe that one of the ways we have to encourage development in these countries is to open up our markets to their goods and services. This is why, in my opinion, Bill C-5 is a valid contribution to developing countries.

Some of these countries have already made the strategic choice of promoting export growth to improve their economic development. Results have been outstanding in most cases.

This strategic choice was made in the sixties by South Korea and Taiwan, and in the seventies by Thailand. These countries are living proof of the value of such a strategy.

Originally, the three countries had the social and economic characteristics we observe in several developing countries and those are a large and growing population, a low level of investment and an economy largely based on agriculture.

In less than three decades, they achieved an absolutely stunning rate of growth, along with some other countries in the region.

This phenomenal success is the result, among other things, of two strategic choices, one that I just mentioned, which is the implementation of export-driven policies, and manpower training as a major priority.

In this regard, Quebec is particularly sensitive to the importance of implementing a manpower policy which is consistent, flexible, structured and effective.

At the beginning of the sixties and until the early seventies, South Korea and Taiwan launched a very aggressive strategy of economic growth based on export promotion. A lot of incentives were made accessible to industry in areas that, today, we call soft sectors, for example textiles, clothing and shoes.

(1020)

Following the difficult 1970s, these two countries emerged with leading annual growth rates of nearly 10 per cent between 1985 and 1991. They also succeeded in diversifying their production in favour of goods with a higher value added.

*Government Orders*

An interesting parallel can also be drawn with certain Latin American countries. Before the 1980s, countries of Latin America would have been hard pressed to pass for champions of free trade. Quite the contrary, in fact.

Most of them had adopted trade policies aimed at protecting their domestic market from foreign competition, instead of policies which would have allowed domestic firms to exploit their comparative advantages on foreign markets.

However, in the early 1970s, a number of Third World countries and many Latin American countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Peru, experienced a debt crisis. Consequently, with the blessing of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, these countries were compelled to adopt outward-looking policies, lowered tariff barriers, introduced import permits and quotas and adopted export promotion measures.

During the 1980s, several Latin American countries rid themselves of dictatorial regimes and replaced them with democratically elected governments. Contrary to all expectations, these governments managed to survive and, in most cases, are still around today.

Conditions in several countries in this region, chief among them Mexico and Chile, appear favourable to very significant economic growth. It comes as no surprise, then, that the adherence of other Latin American countries to NAFTA has aroused considerable interest.

It should be noted, however, that the world trading system still has some shortcomings which impede the economic growth of developing countries.

According to the OECD, sectors such as agriculture and textiles which represented the strength of many developing countries after World War II, have in no time become the target of protectionist measures imposed by industrialized countries.

As paradoxical as it may seem, the beneficial effects of development assistance policies implemented by industrialized countries have often largely cancelled out by the protectionist trade measures these very same countries have adopted.

Under GATT, agriculture was excluded de facto from the usual applicable rules, thereby allowing industrialized countries to protect their domestic market through the imposition of tariffs and quotas.

Moreover, industrialized countries have not hesitated to subsidize their agricultural surpluses around the world, pulling the rug out from under developing countries in the process and often rendering the latter's domestic production uncompetitive. With your permission, I would like to quote an excerpt from an OECD report released last year which states the following: "Exports of Latin American agricultural products have also been affected by the high levels of agricultural production within OECD countries as well as by the ever-increasing level of subsidies. In

some cases, agricultural exports from developing countries have been squeezed out of profitable markets by highly subsidized exports from industrialized countries".

Furthermore, the tariff system in place in industrialized nations penalizes imports of processed products by giving the advantage to raw materials and other unprocessed products. Developing countries would be at a disadvantage if they wanted to diversify their economies and begin producing value added products.

The success of the recent GATT negotiations should make life easier for exporters in Third World countries, particularly exporters of agricultural products, clothing and textiles. The elimination of tariff barriers on a growing number of products from tropical countries, along with the dismantling in ten years' time of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement, which will be included under the GATT rules, should also be a boost to Third World countries.

However, over the last decade or so, we have been witnessing, unfortunately, a resurgence in trade protectionism. New forms of protectionism, such as orderly market sharing agreements, voluntary restrictions on exports and other quota measures, have been introduced. Automobiles, semi-conductors and steel have been targeted, along with other industries which successfully lobbied for protectionist measures.

These measures add to those already in place for textile, clothing and agricultural products. Anti-dumping measures, so-called temporary safeguard measures and accusations of unfair trade practices are popping up everywhere these days.

(1025)

Canada, as we know, is certainly not immune from this insidious and looming return to protectionism, particularly from its main trade partner, the United States, which is the market for almost 80 per cent of its exports. Our trade problems with the United States, especially with beer, steel, magnesium, softwood lumber and agricultural products, constantly remind us that free trade benefits are fragile and that we must watch our trade partners' practices more closely.

Economic development formulas vary between countries. Export promotion strategies are not, by themselves, a panacea. Although they are important, there is no question that other measures must also be contemplated.

People's happiness is not necessarily contingent on increased individual purchasing power. We must allow societies to develop at their own pace without forcing them to conform to the economic development model dictated by market forces. It is a decision that these societies must make for themselves. It is, however, important and even essential to contribute to these countries' economic growth by giving them preferential access to our markets.

*Government Orders*

Promoting the growth of developing countries' exports to industrialized nations is therefore a most commendable goal. The Bloc Québécois does not deny it, of course. But if I may, I would like to outline a number of concerns we, on this side of the House, have about the practical application of the general preferential tariff.

We must first of all recognize that the countries that currently benefit the most from the general preferential tariff are newly industrialized countries, mainly the new economic powers of Southeast Asia. These are not, strictly speaking, third world or developing countries.

Furthermore, China and Indonesia, for instance, which are the beneficiaries of 38 per cent and 3 per cent respectively of Canadian preferential tariffs, are regularly censured for their repeated violations of human rights.

As the purpose of the general preferential tariff is to help real developing countries to grow, without hurting the Canadian economy in the process, we should be entitled to a more in-depth study of products and countries benefiting from the general preferential tariff.

This brings us to question the relevance of maintaining the general preferential tariff for developing countries that have since become newly industrialized nations. As a result, we must determine if these countries still meet the criteria allowing us to define what is a developing country, which, we agree, can be very complex.

In the cases concerning us, we should ask whether newly industrialized countries such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore should still get preferential treatment. If all industrialized countries decided to take away from these countries preferential tariffs generally extended to developing nations, this could impact on their treatment by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or regional development banks.

One must know that the United States no longer gives preferential tariff treatment to South Korea and Hong Kong. Japan, Canada and the European Community, for their part, have still not made a decision on this issue.

The federal government has already announced its intention to study how desirable it would be to continue to extend the general preferential tariff to countries that have reached a high level of economic development. In fact, such a study is unavoidable in preparation for the meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to be held in 1995, precisely about the general preferential tariff. Now that the Uruguay Round is over, the government has also announced its intention to review, and probably reduce, the extent of the general preferential tariff.

In addition, we know that the government intends to consult with Canadian manufacturers before making any decision on the general preferential tariff, a move that we wholeheartedly endorse.

It goes without saying, however, that any change to the general preferential tariff as it applies to any product or country could have major political repercussions.

(1030)

Taking the general preferential tariff away from South Korea or any other newly industrialized country could lead to a deterioration in our trade relations with them since they may not like what Canada is doing.

The case of China, which has nearly 40 per cent of Canada's preferential tariffs, could also arise. Like the United States, which is wondering whether it should now deny most favored nation status to China, mainly because of the repeated violations of human rights in that country, Canada could show how important it considers human rights to be by also considering withdrawing the general preferential tariff from all countries that blatantly violate these rights.

In that the government has said many times that it intends to involve Parliament in Canada's foreign policy, and since any change in the scope of the general preferential tariff is likely to have political repercussions, would the government agree to consider the possibility of consulting parliamentarians, as well as Canadian manufacturers, before changing any component whatever of the general preferential tariff and if necessary amend this bill along those lines?

Such a consultation could proceed in a flexible and efficient manner through the Standing Committee on Finance or the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Be that as it may, I eagerly await the government's response to this suggestion, which I am making as a request, in view of the importance which the government claims to attach to the opinion and judgment of parliamentarians.

I close by reiterating our total support for the basic principles underlying the extension of the general preferential tariff for the so-called developing countries. At the same time, I also reiterate my concerns and questions about applying this tariff to the newly industrialized countries and to developing countries which openly violate human rights.

I trust that the government will follow up our request for prior consultation with parliamentarians before any change is made to the general preferential tariff structure.

[English]

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be involved in this debate. First, I would like to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for the extensive outline of not only the benefits but the concerns with regard to Bill C-5.

*Government Orders*

I would also like to thank the Minister of Finance for the co-operation of his staff in providing information to us as a caucus, not only on this bill but on other bills as well. The staff responded very quickly and briefed us well in an open manner and presented us with a very good case for and against the bill and we were able to make a judgment as a caucus.

As we well recognize, the purpose of Bill C-5 is to extend Canada's general preferential tariffs for developing countries from June 30, 1994 to June 30, 2004. That is a major commitment we are making as Canadians to the needs of other countries in terms of industrial and social development, in our attempt to bring their economic base closer to what we enjoy as Canadians. In terms of a world responsibility as Canadians we are to be well commended for taking that approach.

The Reform Party, after examining this bill and going over the presentations that were made to us, supports the bill. We feel that it is right in principle and that it is an obligation we should take on as Canadians.

There were some very positive qualities of the general preferential tariff that we felt should be noted at this time in our presentation to the House. First, it will lower import barriers, a concept we support as the Reform Party. Second, the lower tariffs will stimulate economic growth in developing countries. Third, it is very wide ranging in terms of its unconditional nature as to how it can assist these countries. More than 180 developing countries and territories qualify for lower Canadian tariffs. That is certainly a benefit.

Another reason for our support is that while in a sense Canada loses in terms of bookkeeping some \$156 million because of the lower tariffs, we recognize as Canadians that we benefit because the general preferential tariff will also enable us to have lower prices in terms of goods as consumers in this country. That certainly is a direct benefit in that sense. However, we do have some concerns.

(1035)

First, while businesses in our country can benefit from lower input costs under this system, there are some questions with regard to savings that may actually be passed on to consumers.

We would be remiss in our responsibilities if we moved into the marketplace and said that we should implement some type of legislation to prevent that. I think more supervision by government, more public servants to do that which would cost us as taxpayers more money, or more interventionist actions are certainly not the way.

We must have confidence that the forces of the marketplace will take care of that concern. It may not in all cases but I think if we let the marketplace work properly, it certainly will.

Second, while this system will help developing countries, I believe we should go one step further by using this opportunity to encourage a responsible government in those nations. We certainly want to give disadvantaged nations a chance to grow economically.

However, we want to ensure, and I am sure we all feel this as parliamentarians, that these countries uphold a major standard of human rights such as we enjoy here in Canada. It is part of the obligation and part of the message that I think we want to send indirectly through this bill to those nations that are benefiting from our compassion here as Canadians.

Third, we should ensure that rebates to developing countries are not part of the deal. The government should ensure that countries only benefit from the reduced tariffs. I am sure the government will keep a watchful eye in that area.

Fourth, we as a government must prevent any kind of dumping of cheap imports into other countries as that may strain relations with our trading partners. For example, a commodity should not be imported into Canada at a reduced tariff and then dumped into the United States to cause a distortion in the American marketplace.

In summary, as I said before, we support the bill and encourage the government to move quickly in this direction. It was explained in our briefing sessions that if changes need to be made quickly, regulations can be changed and are in place and they can be amended to protect any industry that may be adversely affected by these tariffs.

Those industries have the right to appeal and to make presentations. If the government in its wisdom following those presentations sees that there is a negative effect which affects our industries or our businesses, it can act very quickly by changing those respective regulations. I think that is a good addendum to this bill.

If we take these points into consideration I believe we will be upholding Canada's trading interests, a goal that we certainly want to strive for. I encourage Parliament to support the bill and proceed with it as quickly as possible.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, I will cover five points in my remarks. To help my colleagues follow, here is the plan. I will start with underdevelopment and the poverty gap. I will then set Bill C-5 in context. I will talk about Canadian official development assistance. I will reiterate the Bloc Québécois position as stated by my colleague and, finally, I will describe a certain number of concerns.

*Government Orders*

Out of a world population of five billion, four billion people are living in developing countries, one billion of whom in total deprivation.

The United Nations has reported that the gap between have nations and have-not nations has doubled over the past 30 years. The economic growth rate of developing countries has been dropping steadily, particularly in Africa and Latin America. In the Bruntland report, the World Commission on Environment and Development stated, and I quote: "Deteriorating terms of trade, rising debt-service obligations, stagnating flows of aid, and growing protectionism in the developed market economies caused severe external payment problems. The increased cost of foreign borrowing, at a time when exports were depressed, also helped to plunge many developing countries into debt crises. Growth was cut back and many social objectives fell by the wayside, including those having to do with employment, health, education, environment, and human settlements".

(1040)

The United Nations development program authorities estimate that protectionism in industrialized countries will deprive the South of \$500 billion a year in export income, or ten times more than it receives annually in development assistance. At the same time, due to structural adjustment programs imposed on them, developing countries are forced to abandon any form of tariff protection and what not.

This means there can be no sustainable development without fair and equitable reform and restructuring of international financial, trading and policy systems. Less trade protectionism on the part of industrialized countries would be a first step in a true financial reform.

Just recently, we have heard the president of the GATT general assembly warn industrialized countries against reintroducing protectionism on the basis of preserving human rights and the environment.

In that context, industrialized countries have taken steps in the seventies, with the general preferential tariff, to promote a reduction of duties for developing countries. In 1974, Canada established the GPT under the Customs Tariff Act. Since then, the tariff has been extended every ten years.

The purpose of this bill is to support the economic growth of developing countries by promoting exports from these countries to Canada through tariff reduction.

The general preferential tariff is beneficial in many other ways as well. First of all, the GPT is a unilateral tariff reduction program, and Canada remains free to change tariff preferences without breaking any commitment under the GATT agreement.

The Canadian GPT would be one of the best in the world as it would not be used to put financial or political pressure on developing countries, as is the case in other countries.

Canada also made sure that imports under the GPT caused no injury to domestic producers. That is why the GPT does not apply to all products imported from developing countries, but only to those products which do not adversely affect the competitiveness of Canadian producers. Also, safeguard measures have been developed to protect Canadian businesses affected by the importation of goods under the GPT. Two such safeguards are presently applied to rubber soles and inner tubes.

It should be pointed out that, in 1992, gross imports under the GPT yielded approximately \$90 million, or 5 per cent of Canada Customs' revenues.

Bill C-5 extends the general preferential tariff for another ten years. The Bloc Quebecois supports this government bill with reservations, but we will get into that later.

Canadian development assistance has been drying up for a few years. Difficult economic conditions in Canada have often been set forth to explain or justify this drying up. Budget cuts in official development assistance have reduced contributions to the assistance program to 0.4 per cent of the Canadian GDP.

(1045)

To put things in perspective, Norway spends 1.16 per cent of its GDP on international assistance, Denmark and Sweden 1.03 per cent, the Netherlands 0.86 per cent, France 0.63 per cent, and Finland 0.62 per cent. In other words, although Canada is generous in absolute terms, it is not in the lead group and it is rather far from the internationally recognized standard of 0.7 per cent.

The reality is that, in the nineties, we almost gave up any measure which could have enabled us to reach that level. More recently, the April 1993 budget restricted to 1.5 per cent, as of 1994-95, the budget increase for Canadian international assistance.

A large part of Canadian development aid is provided through bilateral assistance and it covers more than 150 countries. Projects implemented are the subject of agreements between Canada and each beneficiary country. However, Canada also looks after its own interests, since 80 per cent of goods and services targeted for this bilateral aid come from our country. Tied aid, as it is called, has the effect of considerably reducing the value of the help provided to beneficiary countries.

For all intents and purposes, bilateral aid is a disguised form of subsidy to Canadian exporters. This creates a danger in that profiteering could play havoc with the priorities of assistance programs, by giving too much importance to commercial interests.



*Government Orders*

In 1993-94, bilateral aid is distributed in this fashion: Africa and the Middle East get 45 per cent, Asia 37 per cent, and Latin America 18 per cent. It must also be noted that this form of support represents 44 per cent of total Canadian aid to developing countries.

In spite of some flaws, preferential customs tariffs are an important tool of Canadian development aid. In an increasingly global economy, foreign trade, and this is particularly true for Canada, plays a vital role in the creation and retention of jobs.

It is precisely because Canada is free to classify developing countries, from the poorest to the most developed, that the GPT could be a flexible tool to direct aid to those who need it most.

The Bloc Québécois agrees that promoting export growth of developing countries is a very commendable objective. However, we do have some reservations.

First, a large number of those countries which benefit the most from the GPT are newly industrialized countries, especially Brazil and the dragons and tigers of South-East Asia to which the hon. member referred. Those countries can no longer be considered as genuine third world nations. Yet, they are the main beneficiaries of that tariff.

Moreover, importing certain products from these countries, such as auto parts, could adversely affect the setting up of manufacturing plants for those parts close to auto builders in Canada, to use the same example.

Also, some countries like China and Indonesia, which largely benefit from preferential tariffs, are known for repeatedly violating human rights. If the Canadian government was consistent in the implementation of its foreign policy, it would have some reservations about favouring countries which do not respect human rights, as it does in the case of its development aid policy which, as you know, is conditional upon the respect of those basic rights.

Since the general preferential tariff is designed to help the growth of developing countries without causing a prejudice to the Canadian and Quebec economies, we would be justified to ask, at this time, for a more in-depth study on countries and products benefitting from the GPT.

This leads me to the classification of developing countries into newly industrialized countries. Does the government think that the general preferential tariff program still meets its objective, which is to promote the growth of developing countries, considering that some of the beneficiary countries have already reached high growth levels? And since newly industrialized countries are entitled to this tariff, does the hon. member think it is appropriate for the national treasury to forgo millions of dollars in annual revenues which is being not collected by customs services?

(1050)

How to determine which countries no longer meet the criteria used to define developing countries is a complex issue. But we have to wonder if countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and others should still be entitled to a preferential treatment concerning customs duties.

Since my colleague already mentioned it, I just want to remind the hon. members that the United States have already withdrawn the benefit of a number of preferential tariffs.

It seems that the Canadian government wants to wait a little longer before taking a stand on this issue. However, it would be important for Canada to determine its position before the 1995 meetings of the United Nations conference.

In short, the Bloc Québécois believes that we should reflect on the possibility of linking the general preferential tariff to some criterias, such as the industrialization level of the beneficiary, the human rights situation in that country, the alignment of its foreign policy with that of Canada, compliance with established rules of public international law, such as non-violence in its international relations and peaceful resolution of conflicts in which the beneficiary is involved.

As you see, before extending the benefit of the general preferential tariff, Canada should take into account these principles which should influence our foreign policy. But Canada should also consider the restrictions of its trade policy. For example, withdrawing the benefit of the general preferential tariff from any product originating in China could jeopardize trade relations with this country or other countries. However, since development assistance should be provided to the people who most need it, the list of beneficiaries of the general preferential tariff should be revised.

The Bloc Québécois believes that such decisions should flow from consultations and discussions within the Canadian Parliamentary system, including the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.

Unfortunately, under the Customs Tariff Act, the government is under no obligation to undertake such consultations. On the contrary, the government may, on the recommendation of the Minister of Finance, by order in council, amend the list of beneficiaries to the general preferential tariff without any consultation. We, in the Bloc Québécois, think it is unfortunate that the House of Commons does not have any say in the matter.

The Bloc Québécois urges the government to undertake consultations with its Parliamentary partners, at least for the review of its position on the general preferential treatment before the 1995 meetings of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development, as well as discussions on its general policy concerning the classification of countries.

S. O. 31

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my colleague from Louis-Hébert. First of all, I want to congratulate and to thank him. His speech was very interesting because his arguments confirmed those I developed in my own speech, arguments to the effect that the general preferential tariff can be profitable for developing countries.

Of course, Canada considers this general preferential tariff to be part of its assistance program to developing countries. However, the question is this: Can this tariff have an adverse impact on the Canadian market? I said a moment ago, and the minister has made the same point before, that the government intends to consult Canadian manufacturers on their position so that they do not find themselves at a disadvantage because some products have easier access to the Canadian market thanks to the general preferential tariff.

Of course, the general preferential tariff represents a plus, an important asset, for developing countries that would like to export their production overseas, particularly to Canada.

(1055)

Here is my question: What are the advantages or disadvantages of this general preferential tariff for Canada?

**Mr. Paré:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think that there are really any disadvantages, because under the customs tariff, products from developing countries against which Canadian products can compete are excluded from the general preferential tariff when imported into Canada.

As for the advantages, I will say that since it is a well established fact that Canada often ties its development assistance to trade with developing countries, it is a major beneficiary of those imports. So, as I said, there are no real disadvantages because of the safeguards included in the legislation.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my learned colleague for his brilliant speech. He talked about reviewing the list of countries benefiting from general preferential tariffs and about developing countries, but he added that we should examine the issue of assistance given to countries which are not necessarily at the developing stage but where such assistance would have important commercial impacts and therefore could also impact on our future relationships with them.

Could the member tell us what countries he had in mind by that? And since, according to what we saw this last month, the government seems ready to hold debate after debate, and yesterday was even prepared to create a special committee on national defence, would it not be appropriate to have that list of countries and the assistance given through preferential tariffs reviewed by a committee, be it a new one or an existing one, where members of all parties would meet and where they could

also think of ways of increasing the assistance given to developing countries?

**Mr. Paré:** Mr. Speaker, it is true the general preferential tariffs are applied to more than 150 countries, 180 to be exact. Evidently, these countries are not all at the same development stage. Some are at the first stage, others are more advanced. In fact, tariffs are adjusted according to three categories.

Given that tariffs are renewed for ten-year periods, we should think about this gradation and try to determine if it still appropriate to classify certain countries as underdeveloped when in fact they have experienced dazzling growth, as some Asian countries have.

We must keep in mind however that if we are to strike a country off the most advantageous list, we will have to do so with considerable tact and diplomacy because such a measure could have an impact on our commercial relationships with that country or other ones.

I think it will be important to proceed in co-operation with the House, so the House should be aware of these data. Indeed, the House has a tool in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I feel it would be quite in order that issues of such importance no longer be determined by order in council on a simple recommendation of the minister. In keeping with the spirit of the red book, the government should allow all members of the government and of the opposition to participate in the review of these questions which could affect the very image of Canada.

(1100)

*[English]*

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think there may be a disposition to deal with this bill immediately at second reading, in committee of the whole, and call it for third reading immediately thereafter with unanimous consent.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to committee of the whole.)

**The Speaker:** It being 11 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]*

### THE BUDGET

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, I have received a number of phone calls, letters and faxes from constituents in my riding of York—Simcoe expressing a great deal of concern about the possible taxation of health and dental benefits and a reduction of the RRSP contribution limit.

*S. O. 31*

I urge the Minister of Finance to be sensitive to the views of these and all Canadians. We must take a fair and balanced approach when tackling the very difficult financial challenges we face as a nation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, since May 1993, members of all other parties in the House have presented petitions against the federal government's official language policy.

I deplore the attitude of Liberal and Reform members who table these petitions in the House and thus support Canadian extremists who want to ban the use of French by the federal administration. I also want to condemn members who table these petitions while claiming they do not support them.

I would ask my Liberal and Reform colleagues to stop this hypocrisy. If they believe English should become the only official language of the federal government, let them say so.

Members of the Bloc Québécois support maintaining the use of both official languages in federal departments and crown corporations, and I would ask all members to show the same flexibility and tolerance.

\* \* \*

**WINTER OLYMPICS**

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, members of the Reform Party would like to congratulate, on behalf of all Canadians, the young athletes who won medals at the 17th Winter Olympics in Norway.

We congratulate Edi Podivinski, Isabelle Brasseur and Lloyd Eisler, Jean-Luc Brassard and our latest gold medal winner, Myriam Bédard.

[English]

These athletes are shining examples of hard work and dedication to their sport. We are very proud of them and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

\* \* \*

**HOME BUYERS PLAN**

**Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the house today, literally in the 11th hour, to make an appeal to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Public Works and Government Services to support the extension of the RRSP home buyers plan.

I am presenting a list of almost 1,000 names of residents of the greater Toronto area and Mississauga who have made the effort to mail in letters in support of the continuation of this plan.

It is a federal program that has helped thousands of Canadians to achieve the benefits of home ownership without requiring direct financial assistance from the federal government.

To date, the plan has assisted more than 200,000 Canadians in buying a home and has generated substantial economic activity across the country.

Supporting the extension of this program beyond the March 1 deadline will be invaluable for the many Canadians who would not otherwise be able to achieve the dream of home ownership.

\* \* \*

(1105)

**MULTICULTURALISM**

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize multiculturalism week in my home province of British Columbia, as proclaimed by the Hon. David Lam, Lieutenant Governor.

From February 13 to February 19, British Columbians will take part in events and activities throughout the province, affirming the diverse cultural heritage that is integral to life in our province.

I thank all those groups participating in this week's festivities. Their active involvement in the lives of our communities is crucial. It enhances understanding of the different and vibrant cultural traditions of Canada.

I am proud that the federal government is a willing partner in this effort. We will initiate measures to promote Canada's cultural heritage.

I hope all Canadians and all levels of government will support these initiatives to bolster our cultural institutions and shared citizenship values.

Today our culture and identity as Canadians are threatened. More than ever, Canadians across the nation need to renew their commitment to cultural development and linguistic duality.

I extend my gratitude to the people of British Columbia for taking the lead this week.

\* \* \*

**LISA CAMPEAU**

**Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, an article in the February issue of *Vogue* magazine tells the story of a young constituent of Saint-Henri—Westmount named Lisa Campeau.

S. O. 31

Miss Campeau, who is 24 years of age, has spent the last two years working at great personal risk on a UN relief operation in Sudan. She has developed a reputation as one of the toughest relief workers in Africa.

When the leader of a group of 2,000 Sudanese people told her to give them food or someone will come in the middle of the night and kill her, she replied: "It is pointless, if you kill me it will stop the relief flights in this area".

Despite the tremendous danger of her job and even the murder of several fellow relief workers, Lisa Campeau continues her mission. She wants to make a career in development and has ambitions of shaping the program she now helps administer.

Lisa Campeau is an example of how many young Canadians are working daily to make the world a better place. All Canadians should take pride in their commitment and idealism and support them in their initiatives.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### WINTER OLYMPICS

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of my colleague from Charlesbourg, on my own behalf and on behalf of all Quebecers, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the exceptional performance of Myriam Bédard at the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer.

This morning, Ms. Bédard won the gold medal for the 15-kilometre biathlon and joins our two other athletes from Quebec who won a medal, Jean-Luc Brassard and Isabelle Brasseur.

I may recall that Ms. Bédard won the bronze medal at the Games in Albertville and the gold and silver at the 1993 world championships.

The Bloc Québécois salutes the courage and perseverance of this fellow Quebecer and outstanding athlete. As we know, Ms. Bédard has had to overcome many problems throughout her career, which were caused by Biathlon Canada. We hope the Minister of Canadian Heritage will take steps to deal with the many problems faced by athletes from Quebec.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### CFB EDMONTON

**Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to express the feelings of many Edmontonians, particularly those in Edmonton—Strathcona, regarding Canadian Forces Base Edmonton.

While I recognize that some restructuring of our military must be considered in terms of fiscal responsibility, I would ask that the Minister of National Defence consider the following regarding CFB Edmonton.

It is the largest supply and service depot in western Canada. It has recently undergone a \$10 million expansion. It contains the fourth largest runway in the world.

What concerns me most is that the department is considering these base closures before it has determined the new role of the Canadian military. It would seem logical to first conduct such a review and then decide what bases should be closed.

CFB Edmonton is the gateway to the north and it is extremely well suited to serve Canada's needs in the next century.

\* \* \*

#### ROYAL BANK

**Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, today the Royal Bank branch in the village of Lynden in my riding is closing its doors after 92 years of continuous operation. It is a move that will seriously affect the small businesses in the community, for the branch draws hundreds of people every week from the surrounding farms.

Royal Bank officials have admitted that the branch is profitable. Their decision to close was based on what they said was poor growth potential in the area.

(1110)

They have turned a deaf ear to petitions, protest marches, extensive coverage in the local media and letters to both the bank chairman and president. They have insisted that bank customers remove themselves to a new drive-in branch in the city of Brantford.

It is ironic that this government yesterday declared a moratorium on closing rural post offices in order to preserve rural communities.

The Royal Bank received its original mandate, its charter, from the people of Canada. It is a pity that now it chooses no longer to listen to them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, many small and medium-sized businesses find it difficult to get financing from major banks.

And this, in spite of the fact that only 13 out of 1,000 loans to small businesses are not paid back. In other words, 98.7 per cent of borrowers are creditworthy. Under the present circumstances, 98.7 per cent is a rather impressive average we cannot ignore.

*S. O. 31*

Given the fact that there are more than 900,000 small businesses in Canada and that they account for more than 4 million direct jobs, banks must be encouraged to become their partners instead of their adversaries.

Small and medium sized businesses, which are the driving force of the economy, must have guaranteed access to capital in order to develop new technologies and find new markets. Let us not forget that today's small businesses could be tomorrow's multinationals. Let us help them prosper.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CHILD POVERTY**

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce today to this House and to Ottawa residents watching at home the second annual gala for child poverty here in Ottawa.

This successful event is sponsored by the Fund for a New Generation, a group of young people from the public, private and university sectors determined to bring hope to Ottawa's poor children.

On February 26 at the Canadian Museum of Nature this group of young people hopes to raise \$5,000 more than last year's target of \$10,000 for the Ottawa-Carleton Child Poverty Fund.

The proceeds contribute to communal meal and early education programs.

This is why I am calling for your support. There is a hotline number. Please call 769-5012 for tickets or other information.

I issue the challenge to local Ottawa businesses to help these young people. I commend these people for their initiative and hope that it serves as an example of what we can do together to improve our children's future.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**DAVIS INLET**

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies):** Mr. Speaker, we have just heard an unconfirmed report that a statement will shortly be issued by the Minister of Indian Affairs concerning relocation of the population of Davis Inlet, in Labrador. That relocation has been sought for much too long by the community, which has suffered greatly because of government indifference and negligence.

Once again, we wish to express our concern about government inaction and our hope that the minister is really prepared to respond to repeated requests by the Inuit of Davis Inlet and to

give them the promised lands, which are better suited to a decent life, something to which all Quebecers and Canadians are entitled.

The minister was thus responding to repeated pleas by the Bloc Québécois to improve living conditions for native peoples.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CONSUMERS PAPER CORPORATION**

**Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, I provide today another example from my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby why government spending is out of control.

The Western Economic Diversification Fund previously announced it would provide \$5 million to Consumers Paper Corporation to build a tissue paper plant in Redcliffe, Alberta. This was to create 150 new jobs. In reality it was to subsidize an ill-advised venture that would be in direct competition with Scott Paper of New Westminster.

There are already about 100 brands of tissue paper on the market with over-capacity of production. The new scheme would just add to the excess. If the mill made it, jobs would be lost elsewhere. If the plan failed, taxpayers would again foot the bill and families in Redcliffe would be victims of a bad government decision.

Government intrusions of this type create dependency. Why should taxpayers' money be put at risk on questionable ventures in a time of record federal deficits?

\* \* \*

**RURAL POST OFFICES**

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, February 17 will be remembered as a great day for rural Canada. It is the day that the ill-conceived Tory plan to shut down all rural post offices was finally put to rest.

Rural Canada will be able to breathe again. Rural post offices will be the heart of our small communities as they have been in the past.

The minister responsible for Canada Post and the Prime Minister and indeed all of cabinet deserve our praise. I am sure all rural Canadians are grateful.

Now let us turn to the next postal issue. Let us all join together to convince Canada Post to stop harassing rural mail contractors and to provide rural mail contractors with some kind of dignity, the kind of dignity they had in their employment under previous Liberal governments.

(1115)

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the announcement made yesterday in Brussels by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization that a moratorium on cod fishing in international waters off Newfoundland will take place immediately.

This ban was called for by our party during the last election and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has worked hard for its implementation.

As a member from Atlantic Canada where so many fishermen and the fishery itself are affected by foreign overfishing, this moratorium is welcome news. A small ray of hope now glimmers at the end of the tunnel for the fishery off the east coast.

I appreciate as well that the Canadian proposal to extend until the end of 1994 the pilot on board program that places observers on vessels to ensure the moratorium is maintained has been implemented. The minister should be complimented for his efforts.

However we must continue to be vigilant in everything we do nationally and internationally to ensure that the Atlantic cod fishery survives to be a viable economic industry in the future.

\* \* \*

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about yesterday's refusal by the Reform Party House leader to allow a ministerial statement in the House.

Private members fought long and hard against Brian Mulroney's policy of ignoring this Chamber. He broke the longstanding tradition of making government announcements in the Chamber. Instead he and his ministers made statements to the press, often off the Hill, which members would read about afterward.

If this Chamber is ever going to get back its ancient role of being able to control and contain government spending, it must reclaim the right to hear all ministerial announcements that affect spending. Forcing ministers out of the House, as the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Chair would hope that members would refrain from attacking other members personally.

The generally accepted rule of the House has been that we have allowed a certain leeway on attacking party policy. But I would encourage hon. members to refrain from attacking each other personally or from imputing any kind of motive.

*Oral Questions*

If hon. members could consider that as a guideline it would be very much appreciated.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***KANESATAKE RESERVE**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The Mohawk leader of Kanestake, Jerry Peltier, said yesterday that he had the government's assurance that there would be no police or military intervention on that territory to end the criminal activities of certain individuals who are terrorizing the population. The situation has become so serious that the chief editorialist of *La Presse*, Alain Dubuc believes that tough action from the police and, if necessary, from the armed forces has become inevitable.

Is it true that the government has formally assured the chief of the Mohawk communities that there would be no intervention from the police or from the army to end the smuggling once and for all?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, absolutely not.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, it is always curious to see the reactions following meetings between Mohawk leaders and the government; there are always at least two versions. At least two.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether she considers acceptable what a Mohawk spokesman from Akwesasne said when he threatened armed reprisals for any police intervention to end smuggling activities.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I consider these comments as repugnant as the comments of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday when he compared the situation in Bosnia to the tobacco problem here in Canada.

(1120)

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** That is not what the Leader of the Opposition said, and she knows that perfectly. I know that she is aware of repugnant statements, she is quite familiar with them.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Can she confirm the statements of the spokesman for the Mohawk community of Akwesasne, Mr. Russell Roundpoint, who said that many smugglers have AK-47 and AK-15 machine guns which they have admitted using to protect their cargoes of illicit goods in the Akwesasne—Cornwall corridor?

*Oral Questions*

This government wanted names. Russell Roundpoint made those statements. That is one name. What does the Deputy Prime Minister think?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the member wants to quote people and now he says that the quote of the Leader of the Opposition is not true.

I want to emphasize again that the Government of Canada does not agree with statements like this one the Leader of the Opposition: "We are courageous enough to maintain peace in Bosnia, but when we have a problem here, we cannot solve it. Come on, it makes no sense. There is something wrong with that. International opinion will have to realize that we have an obligation to preserve our own societies".

How dare he compare the situation in Bosnia with a situation here, where the sale of contraband cigarettes has dropped dramatically in a week! Why is the Leader of the Opposition not here to applaud us?

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy to see that the Deputy Prime Minister does not understand the difference between intervention and situation.

The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister would have the general public believe that the Bloc Quebecois is trying to tarnish the Mohawks' reputation. Everyone, including every person involved in this, knows and recognizes that illicit smuggling activities on Mohawk reserves can be blamed on a handful of armed individuals who are imposing a reign of terror.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Does she recognize that smuggling on reserves is done by a small number of individuals whose activities threaten the safety of the Mohawk people and the surrounding communities?

[*English*]

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition continue to claim they have no hidden agenda here, yet since Monday, according to *La Presse*, 22 questions to the government have been on this topic.

The problem of cocaine did not begin this week. The problem of cocaine is not exclusive to Indian reserves across the country. The problem of illegal drug abuse has existed for many years, including the years that the Leader of the Opposition was sitting in Brian Mulroney's cabinet.

If the member would like to point the finger at Indian reserves and suggest there is a cocaine problem exclusive to them, let him go outside and say that. The reality is that the contraband cigarettes, the drugs, the other issues, are problems of organized crime which are as prevalent in the cities of Hamilton, Toronto and Montreal as they are in Kanasatake and Akwesasne.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that the RCMP itself has declared that the territory is a hub. The supplementary question I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister is this: The Mohawk leaders' alarmist declarations have raised the already high level of tension on the reserves. Is it not the Prime Minister's duty to meet with the Mohawk leaders to demand that they promise to co-operate with the government to end smuggling and to ensure respect for the law on their territory like everywhere else in Canada, as the government claims?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, if there is one group responsible for feeding the crisis, it is the opposition.

Just last week, a member of the Bloc visited the reserves, supposedly for a door-to-door survey. "Do you own weapons? Do you buy contraband goods?" Just imagine, Mr. Speaker, what would the reaction of Quebecers and Canadians be if members of Parliament went knocking on their constituents' doors to ask them about their illegal activities at home. Is that what Bloc members mean by democracy? I do not think so.

\* \* \*

(1125)

[*English*]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and deals with the fiscal reality facing the House.

Yesterday the Government of Saskatchewan brought down a provincial budget with no tax increases and a 33 per cent reduction in its deficit figure. Yesterday the Quebec premier said that his next budget will feature deficit reduction and a possible tax cut.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House the extent to which federal deficit fighting measures are being co-ordinated with those of the provinces and whether the federal government is leading or following?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Reform Party will have his answer in four days and I know he will be very happy with it.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, what I am asking is something that is relatively straightforward. I asked whether the federal government was co-ordinating its activities with the provinces, the answer to which is not dependent at all on the budget being brought down.

My supplementary question is this. All three levels of government raise their revenues from the same taxpayer, yet no government budget in the country to date explicitly acknowledges the total tax load carried by Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

Does the federal government believe that total tax load must be taken into account in making any changes to federal taxes? Will it ensure that background information on total tax load is included with its budget presentation next week?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, many provinces have more than three levels of government. There are four levels of government and obviously this government is very cognizant that there is only one taxpayer.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, we can see why the Deputy Prime Minister is not Minister of Finance.

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

**Mr. Manning:** My third question is this. As the Deputy Prime Minister knows, Canadian business, capital and jobs have been leaving the country in recent years, citing high tax loads as one of the principal reasons for leaving.

Does the federal government believe that Canada has room to further increase the total tax load carried by Canadians without driving more businesses, more capital and more jobs out of the country?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the government believe that any government policy on finance has to be two track. It has to relate to taxes and jobs.

We did not make the kinds of promises that were made by the leader of the third party in the last election and that may be why he is the leader of the third party.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### LIQUOR SMUGGLING

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another contraband product.

It appears that losses related to smuggling of liquor might be more important than first thought. According to the Association of Canadian Distillers, this illegal activity results in a loss of \$1.2 billion in uncollected taxes. In Quebec, liquor smuggling has increased 35 per cent and now affects 1.7 million cases of liquor, and 2.2 million cases are smuggled into Ontario each year.

Will the Minister of National Revenue order an internal inquiry, following allegations to the effect that some senior customs officials are involved in liquor smuggling?

[English]

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the claim that there are customs officers accepting bribes is one we take extremely seriously.

The Solicitor General and myself announced yesterday that the RCMP would carry out an investigation of these allegations. That is all they are: allegations.

I would point out to the hon. member that the document in the program which indicated this was taking place was dated prior to the last election. It may be that this program is dealing with very dated news. I cannot tell. The information is not there for us to know at what time this program was made and who was speaking.

(1130)

I would again point out that the allegation was not in fact made by the CBC but was made by another individual who claims to be a smuggler and a thief. To rely upon this person's statement with respect to customs officers is perhaps the wrong thing to do until an inquiry has been held.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, considering the scope of the problem, will the minister consider a concerted effort with the provinces to curb the spread of this illegal activity?

[English]

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, yes, the hon. member can rest assured that we are in fact in touch with our provincial counterparts on the issue of the anti-smuggling campaign. May I remind him that the measures taken last week by the Prime Minister, the Solicitor General and other members of the government were not designed only with cigarettes in mind.

We believe the reduction in tax on cigarettes is an important element of a strategy with many parts. Certainly the campaign is against smuggling which includes liquor, illegal arms, pornography, illegal aliens and kidnapped children.

We will continue to maintain the closest links with the provinces to make sure that the interdiction activities of Canada Customs are as effective as they possibly can be.

\* \* \*

### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister in the absence of the Prime Minister.

In recent days our Prime Minister—

**The Speaker:** Order. Earlier in the Question Period there was reference to members either being here or not being here. It is the accepted practice of the House that we do not make mention of whether or not members are here for the simple reason that all of us are called away for various reasons.



*Oral Questions*

If hon. members would refrain from mentioning anything like this it would be appreciated.

**Miss Grey:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad you are here. My question to the Deputy Prime Minister has to do with the fact that our Prime Minister has gone on and on recently about the need for members to use their judgment. Yet the last time this House voted on the question of physician assisted suicide back in March 1993 the Prime Minister, then leader of the opposition, failed to show up to cast his vote.

Canadians are wondering when the Prime Minister—

**The Speaker:** I know the hon. member will want to rephrase her question just a bit and she will be putting the question.

**Miss Grey:** Mr. Speaker, if for some reason some member of the House chose not to vote on that sensitive issue, whom would he or she be representing: the party position, his or her personal judgment or conscience, or the wishes of his or her constituents?

**The Speaker:** The Chair is having a bit of difficulty in the sense that this question, which was put at another time, does not refer directly to the administrative responsibility of the government.

However, I guess in a general sense all hon. members are responsible for voting the way they wish. If the Deputy Prime Minister chooses she may answer.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, to refer to the comments made by the Prime Minister, the point the Prime Minister was trying to make was that in any decision of government we reflect on the views of our constituents, on the position of our party, on the knowledge we have garnered from listening to input, and ultimately we have to make our own decision.

I think the member is treading on very dangerous ground when she is suggesting that we should be mere voting machines. The member will remember that the leader of her own party who took a very strong position against the Charlottetown accord was not supported by his constituents. They in fact voted in favour of the Charlottetown accord, yet he continued to campaign against it.

(1135)

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister can try to legitimize this mandate all she wants, but the fact remains that not a single word was campaigned on about physician assisted suicide, specifically in the Liberal red book.

In the absence of a national referendum what guarantee could the Deputy Prime Minister give that government members will effectively represent their constituents' views on this issue?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made it very clear it is the view of the Liberal Party and of Liberal members of Parliament that they are sent to Parliament to exercise their judgment; they are not voting machines.

If we are to be reduced to mere voting machines in this age of technology, it seems to me we might as well abolish the House of Commons and just put the buttons in everybody's homes so they can vote immediately.

The reason we have members of Parliament is so that we can come to this place, engage in a vigorous and informed debate, and ultimately exercise our judgment in our votes as members of the House of Commons.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COD FISHING**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, NAFO, agreed yesterday to put in place a one-year moratorium on cod fishing in the southern region of the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland. Earlier, I heard my colleague say how delighted he was about it.

Could the government explain why members of NAFO have settled for a one-year moratorium, while Canada was stressing the need for a three-year moratorium in order to rebuild cod stocks?

[English]

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who until very recently was in Brussels—

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

**The Speaker:** The hon. member is taking away my thunder.

**Mr. Anderson:** On behalf of a Canadian representative who has recently been in Brussels may I say to the hon. member that the success of the negotiations on NAFO with respect to cod is a tremendous achievement for the minister and the Canadian government.

I would point out that we have had almost no movement with respect to the members of NAFO on this issue for many years despite previous ministers of fisheries adopting a heckling, blustering tone which our minister of fisheries has failed to adopt. The diplomatic approach has succeeded.

*Oral Questions*

I would like to say that we had a vote. It was not a unanimous vote but it was an excellent vote. There were three abstentions and I believe eight votes in favour. We now have the beginning of an agreement.

It would be unfortunate if we attempted at this point to ask for too much. We have the start of an international agreement. It is the very first time we have had this. I think hon. members on both sides of the House will agree that if we try for too much at this stage we may indeed lose again. The appropriate, diplomatic and low key approach of the minister of fisheries has been enormously successful. I would like to applaud his success.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, I understand the answer the minister just gave us. However, will the Deputy Prime Minister, the minister or God knows who from the other side of the House, acknowledge the fact that this moratorium will have a limited scope, since Norway and the European Union have refused to support the moratorium other members of NAFO have agreed upon?

[English]

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, it is true there were three abstentions, but we believe even when nations abstained in the past they did not necessarily go against the majority decision of NAFO.

We hope and trust that in this case we will have the same experience and we will find that in fact the moratorium is successful. After all, this is the very first time many of these members of NAFO have agreed there is a fundamental conservation issue on those two areas to the Grand Banks.

That is an enormous step forward in the negotiations we have had with the Europeans on this issue.

\* \* \*

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The government recently introduced changes to the standing orders to make the work of parliamentary standing committees more meaningful. Reform members have heard that the government has a plan to prevent Reform MPs from receiving any vice-chairs on these committees.

(1140)

What precisely is the plan that the government members are supposed to follow? Is this type of arm twisting really compatible with the freedom of members in committee as promised in the speech from the throne and in recent amendments to the standing orders?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the whole premise of the member's question is false. In fact the government does not change the standing orders. They are changed by the House of Commons.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the minister.

Would the minister then be willing to send a memo to all government backbenchers advising them that they are free to vote in committee using their judgment which the Prime Minister—

**The Speaker:** Again the Chair is having a bit of difficulty with the formulation of the question. Perhaps I might suggest, if the question could be put in more general terms the member could get the information he is seeking.

**Mr. Hermanson:** Mr. Speaker, regarding this business of the House, the Prime Minister declared he had placed much confidence in the judgment of his members rather than them being mere voting machines.

Therefore, would the minister respond on behalf of the government that it will give its backbenchers freedom to vote and act in committee using that judgment?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the House itself cannot discuss matters that go on within committees. However, in order to be helpful to the hon. member, if he would like to raise this matter with me at one of our House leaders meetings, we will see what we can do to come up with a reasonable response.

It is certainly not the desire of the government to prevent members from doing their jobs. I regret the hon. member has made such an unwarranted innuendo.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister of Industry will not mind if I put my question directly to the Deputy Prime Minister on a matter of great concern to Montreal.

Several times in the past Liberal critics have asked for changes in the POWA program. This income support program for workers affected by collective lay-offs discriminates against Montreal, because one of the criteria provides that 100 workers must be laid off for a company to be eligible for the program. In fact, when the hon. member for Saint-Léonard was still in the opposition, he presented a petition with 8,000 signatures condemning this rule.

*Oral Questions*

Does the Deputy Prime Minister agree that this outrageous discrimination should be stopped, and is she prepared to make lay-offs involving more than 20 employees eligible for this program?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. member's suggestion, and if he wishes to table a Private Member's bill, we are prepared to discuss it. As for making a single change that would involve the Canada Labour Code, when we realize that the province has the lowest minimum wage in the country, I think there are many other priorities to consider.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, this is a true meeting of the minds, since I have made arrangements to table a Private Member's bill. In fact, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister to support it, since she made the suggestion herself. In fact, I see this as a sign that the government is willing to support this initiative.

I would also like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister for assurances that when the next budget is brought down on Tuesday, appropriate action will be taken to stop this discrimination.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Of course, Mr. Speaker, and I think the hon. member of the Bloc should also realize that the Canada Labour Code affects the employees of about 10 per cent of the companies across this country.

I suggest that before the Bloc Québécois goes ahead with this bill, it would be a good idea to check with the Quebec government and make sure there is no conflict between federal and provincial legislation. I assume he will do so before tabling his bill. Once that is done, his bill will be considered.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

A vibrant aerospace industry exists in my riding of Winnipeg St. James. Companies such as Bristol, Standard Aero, Boeing and Paramax have benefited a lot from government and private contracts. However, the industry suffered setbacks when, a few years back, the CF-18 contract was not awarded to Bristol and more recently with the cancellation of the EH-101 helicopter contract.

(1145)

Can the minister inform the House what his department is planning to do to maintain a strong aerospace industry in my riding of Winnipeg St. James and in fact in the whole city of Winnipeg?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that we agree that the strength and the health of the Canadian aerospace industry are of vital importance. This is a niche in which Canada has been very successful. In terms of sales, our aerospace industry is fifth in the world.

I am very well aware, as the member has made me aware, of the fact that there are a number of companies that are very important in the aerospace sector in the Winnipeg region. Bristol Aerospace is expected to win a very large contract very shortly from the U.S. government. Boeing expects to play an important role in the 737-X program.

The fundamental means of providing support to the aerospace industry, apart from the general policy framework that we have, is the defence industry's productivity program. That will be the cornerstone as promised in the red book of our defence conversion initiatives. We expect that we can continue to use that program as a very vital tool—most of its contributions are repayable—to ensure that the Canadian aerospace industry in Winnipeg and in the rest of Canada continues to be very competitive in the world.

\* \* \*

**BLOOD COLLECTION STANDARDS**

**Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

At present the United States standards for blood collection exceed those of Canada. The Canadian Red Cross recently decided to meet the U.S. standards so that Canadian blood can continue to be sent to American blood plasma extraction facilities.

Will the minister commit to raising Canadian blood collection standards to meet those of the United States?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member that our standards for blood collection are certainly not inferior to those of the U.S.

Our standards are different and in some instances they may even be superior because basically we are dealing with very different blood collection systems. In the U.S. it is a fee and for profit type of system whereas ours is a voluntary system.

I believe we will continue to make sure that our blood collection systems are extremely safe.

**Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North):** Mr. Speaker, statements have been recently made to the Krever commission indicating that the Canadian Red Cross centres are supposed to be inspected every two years, but in fact have not been inspected for at least five.

Why does the minister's department not enforce its own inspection regulations?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, since I have become the Minister of Health I have instructed my officials to complete a total inspection of all 17 blood collection centres in Canada before the end of March 1994, that is before the end of this current fiscal year.

I have also instructed my officials to completely inspect all 17 facilities every year from now on. I believe the inspection will be completed as instructed by the end of March.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, the International Joint Commission presented its biannual report on the water quality of the Great Lakes. It lists a series of catastrophic consequences for human health. Birth defects in newborns, lower sperm count, an increased incidence of breast cancer, and a decreased learning capacity among school age children are all cases in point.

(1150)

In view of this report, does the government intend to ban the dumping of chlorine in the Great Lakes by Canadian industries?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether my hon. colleague had a chance to read the report which says, on page seven I think, that the use of chlorine should not be banned until the economic impact of such a decision is examined. If he wants, I can send him a copy.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, this same commission has been making roughly the same kind of recommendations since 1978.

Why is it that the minister refuses to commit herself to following through with the recommendations of a commission which provides for Quebec's participation in the agreement on the Great Lakes water quality, while her own department acknowledges that 40 per cent of the toxic load of the St. Lawrence River originates in the Great Lakes?

[English]

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to point out that in the 100 days that we have been in office we have begun a process to abolish a number of toxins. I think it is important to point out that this is not the first report of the IJC. In fact, I personally made a presentation to the IJC several years ago dealing with the issues specifically of prenatal problems and the problems of breast cancer.

I think it is significant that this particular report is receiving a tremendous amount of attention because it is the first time that there is a relationship between the toxins and the problem of spermatozoa. We have known for many years that there are some serious problems.

The report also points out that the level of toxicity took 50 years to achieve. The report further underlines that there is no immediate call by the IJC for a ban on chlorine. In fact, the IJC report is very specific that any eventual chlorine ban should only be precipitated by a serious study of the effect on the basin of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

We are prepared to table within the next four to six months a list of timetables and schedules for the sunseting of all problem chemicals including the possibility of sunseting organo-chlorines.

\* \* \*

**PAROLE SYSTEM**

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Through research I have to this date come up with the names of 23 first-degree killers who were paroled and then went on to kill 32 more people while on parole. This list is certainly not all the examples but it is a sample of the last five to six years that I know of.

Will the minister agree that our present parole system and parole board is incompetent and that automatic parole should be stopped until this incompetence is addressed?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised an important concern. I do not think there is automatic parole. In any event, it is the intention of this government to have the parole system operate in a way that puts security of the public as a major priority.

I would be happy to have the hon. member's research to see if it will help us to achieve our Liberal government objective.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister agree that a major contributor to this incompetence is based on patronage appointments rather than stringent criteria that checks the qualifications of such a board?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of this government that appointments to the parole board will be based primarily on merit and competence.

I look forward to having the support of the hon. member and his party for this approach.

*Oral Questions***PRODUCT LABELLING**

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

In view of the fact that Canada's standards of safety in the production of food are considerably higher than those of most nations, including the United States of America, will the minister tell us when we can look forward to country of origin labelling for all food products so that Canadians might be more aware of the source of the food they both purchase and consume?

(1155)

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Mr. Speaker, with the hon. member and all Canadians, I am very proud of the standards that we have in this country in terms of health, safety and the quality of our agricultural production.

The question of country of origin labelling is a subject that I am very interested in pursuing. I thank the hon. member for raising the issue.

The issue has implications of course for the private sector and for the provinces. It also has certain trade implications in terms of our obligations with respect to the new GATT and GATT rules. With those and some other cautions in mind, I would be very happy indeed to pursue the principle of this type of labelling in the Canadian national interest.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PEDOPHILIA**

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The Junior Bar Association of Montreal is calling on the Canadian government to amend the Criminal Code so as to criminalize acts of pedophilia committed abroad by Canadian nationals. Certain European countries have recently moved to criminalize acts of pedophilia committed abroad.

My question is as follows: Does the government intend to follow up on the request from the Junior Bar Association of Montreal to criminalize acts of pedophilia committed abroad by Canadians and if so, will the Deputy Prime Minister undertake to table a bill on this matter before the House rises in June?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, of course we take this request from the Junior Bar Association of Montreal very seriously. Pedophilia is repugnant, regardless of where it happens. If Canadian tourists are travelling abroad to take advantage of pedophile networks, as is the case in certain countries, then clearly the Minister of Justice will be looking into the matter raised by the hon. member. I can already tell her that the

Liberal caucus has brought this matter to the minister's attention and I am confident that he will deal with it as soon as possible.

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Deputy Prime Minister will do her best to ensure that appropriate draft legislation is indeed tabled.

Nevertheless, I would like to ask a supplementary question. Can the Deputy Prime Minister give us her assurance that this bill will contain provisions to deal with those who organize what are commonly referred to as sex tours?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Justice is already aware of these very difficult and repugnant issues. I am confident that once he has considered what steps the Canadian government can take to prevent the growth of this kind of tourism—and I hesitate even to call this tourism because it involves disgusting acts—the Minister of Justice will do his utmost to ensure that these kinds of things do not happen here in Canada or anywhere else in the world.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT**

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

On February 16, 1994, BCTV News carried an interview with the Hartwick family of Surrey, B.C. Bonnie Hartwick wants her son, Mike, charged with auto theft after being caught driving a stolen vehicle. Mike is apparently part of a juvenile car theft ring that has stolen more than 100 cars in the last four months. The authorities could not oblige Mike's mother, Bonnie, because Mike is only 10 years old.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister this: Will this government lower the age limits of the Young Offenders Act to make young offenders accountable for their criminal activity?

(1200)

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to answer the hon. member's question as Acting Minister of Justice.

I too heard the press report on the radio and found it quite disturbing. I would be very happy to draw her representation to the attention of the Minister of Justice because I know that he and his department are actively reviewing the Young Offenders Act.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

During the interview, 10-year old Mike stated that he was likely to continue stealing cars because it was fun. He knows that the police cannot charge him. Can the minister explain how this behaviour and attitude is in the best interests of either society or young Mike?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the attitude the hon. member referred to is certainly troubling. This is why I have already said that I want to make sure the Minister of Justice is aware of this case so we can give it full attention in the review of the Young Offenders Act which I know is under way at this time.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mme Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The government has announced an indefinite moratorium to the effect that no new post office will be closed in the rural areas of Canada.

In view of this moratorium, does the government intend to rectify the past errors and re-open some post offices, such as the one in Saint-Clément, which was criticized by the Liberal Party when it was sitting in the Opposition?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Public Works had been able to make his comments yesterday, he would have told you that the decision only applies to post offices that are not now closed.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### OLDMAN DAM

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

I made available two letters to the minister yesterday, one from the former leader of the opposition, the present Prime Minister, and the other from the former environment critic, the present Minister of Finance. These letters relate to the environmental assessment review panel's report on the Oldman dam project.

Would the minister please clarify the government's current position on these letters?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for advance notice of his question. I have already been in touch with my colleague, the minister of fisheries, to ensure that the requirements of the environmental assessment review panel are respected.

#### Routine Proceedings

I am very happy to hear environmental concerns about the Oldman dam expressed by the members of the Reform Party also.

\* \* \*

#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark.

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

\* \* \*

#### POINTS OF ORDER

##### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to you, to the hon. member for Mackenzie and to all hon. members that my refusal yesterday to permit the minister's statement was based solely on an ongoing matter of giving prior and proper notice of statements as agreed on by House leaders.

To suggest that either I or my party is not in support of ministers—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member probably has a very good point of debate, but it would not be a point of order at this time.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

#### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

##### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the House prayer.

(1205)

I would like to advise Your Honour and members of the House that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has come to a unanimous recommendation in respect of the prayers of the House. It recommends that the following form of prayer be adopted for usage by the House of Commons to supersede previous ones and with the leave of the Chair and the House I would propose reading the brief prayer we have recommended so members may hear it.

The prayer reads: "Almighty God, we give thanks for the great blessings which have been bestowed on Canada and its citizens, including the gifts of freedom, opportunity and peace that we enjoy. We pray for our sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and the Governor General. Guide us in our deliberations as members

*Routine Proceedings*

of Parliament and strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities as members. Grant us wisdom, knowledge and understanding to preserve the blessings of this country for the benefit of all and to make good laws and wise decisions. Amen”.

There will follow a moment of silence for private reflection and meditation with another “Amen” at the end.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I hope to be able to move concurrence in this report later on this afternoon.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs which is a list of changes in the membership of committees of the House. I would ask that the House dispense with the reading of the report.

I wish to advise the House that if there is unanimous consent I will move adoption of this seventh report on motions in a few minutes.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS**

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, some time last week I gave notice to the House that I would be introducing three private member's bills Nos. 7, 8, and 9.

I would like the consent of the House to withdraw those notices for the time being.

**The Speaker:** Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Notices Nos. 7, 8, and 9 withdrawn.)

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move, seconded by the member for Elgin—Norfolk, that the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, tabled in the House today, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*English*]

**PETITIONS**

## YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition on behalf of my constituents asking the government to bring in changes to the Young Offenders Act to make it tougher in how it deals with dangerous young offenders.

This petition is presented in memory of Rosalynn Dupuis. I support it and hope that the government will respond to it favourably.

(1210)

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my privilege to rise in the House to present a petition duly certified by the clerk of Petitions on behalf of many concerned constituents of Nanaimo—Cowichan and surrounding areas.

The petitioners humbly call upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for a referendum binding on Parliament to accept or reject two official languages. Given Canada's current fiscal restraints, the petitioners feel the existing official languages law is very expensive and is actually more divisive than cohesive.

[*Translation*]

I suggest our colleagues listen carefully to the speeches we will be making next week on that issue.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Shall the questions stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, with unanimous consent I would also propose that the items standing as Motions Nos. 1, 2, and 3 under government business on today's Order Paper be withdrawn. The three motions are those that are take note motions that have already been debated in the House and it is not intended to extend those debates. To save printing costs we propose removing them from the Order Paper at this time.

*Government Orders*

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motions Nos. 1, 2 and 3 withdrawn.)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health)** moved that Bill C-7, an act respecting the control of certain drugs, their precursors and other substances and to amend certain other acts and repeal the Narcotic Control Act in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to Bill C-7 today. This bill, the controlled drugs and substances bill, addresses one of the most compelling issues with which society is faced today, the issue of drug abuse.

Members will no doubt recall that Canada's drug strategy launched in 1987 created a comprehensive co-ordinated effort to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs to individuals, families and communities.

The harm caused by substance abuse includes, among other things, sickness, death, social misery, crime, violence and economic cost to all levels of government.

My department plays a leading role in Canada's drug strategy but we have many partners who co-operate in its implementation. These partners include other federal departments, the provinces, businesses, law enforcement agencies, labour and professional and volunteer organizations.

The strategy responds to four areas of need: prevention; treatment and rehabilitation; information and research; and enforcement and control.

As each member of this House is only too aware, drug abuse and the untold suffering it causes knows no geography, no socio-economic class, no social graces. I would think that every one of us has met constituents who have experienced the anguish of a son or a daughter, a sister or a brother, a friend or a neighbour consumed by the ravages of drug addiction.

The problem is widespread. According to a United Nations survey, trade in illegal drugs is second only to world trade in arms. Such is the clout of the global industry that we are up against in our efforts to control drug abuse in Canada.

Recent statistics reveal that within a single year almost 15 per cent of young Canadians ages 15 to 19 have admitted to using cannabis.

(1215)

Moreover, the incidence of drug abuse rises considerably among teenagers and young adults who are school drop-outs, unemployed or homeless. Further evidence shows that over a one year period 2 per cent of Canadians claim to have used cocaine.

These are formidable figures. What do they mean? Just what is their significance? They mean heartache; they mean suffering. They mean a toll of crippling misery being exacted on those caught in that seamless web called addiction. The real importance of these figures goes well beyond their statistical relevance. They translate into many millions of dollars spent on health care, family welfare, unemployment benefits and disability pensions.

As a further response to this ongoing challenge, the government announced two years ago its renewed commitment to Canada's drug strategy.

[*Translation*]

On March 31, 1992, Canada's drug strategy was allocated \$270 million over a five year period. Seventy per cent of these funds are directed to reducing demand for drugs through prevention, education and treatment programs. This new bill is one element of the other 30 per cent that is dedicated to law enforcement.

The bill now before us, along with the Proceeds of Crime legislation passed by this House in 1989, are fully consistent with the strategy's objectives relating to enforcement and control.

It takes direct aim at those who seek to profit from exploiting the young and the vulnerable. The bill is intended to consolidate, modernize, enhance and streamline the government's drug control policy underlying two current Acts of Parliament; and to fulfil Canada's obligations under three international conventions.

In 1961, the government of the day enacted the Narcotic Control Act. In 1961 and 1969, Parliament passed Parts III and IV in essence, much of our existing legislative framework is now more than 30 years old.

Furthermore, as signatory to three international agreements on the illegal drug trade, Canada is obligated to the terms of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychoactive Substances of 1988.

Consequently, the controlled drugs and substances bill is designed to achieve three prime objectives: to provide the government with the flexibility required to better control the import, production, export, distribution and use of controlled



*Government Orders*

substances; to provide the mechanisms needed to implement our obligations under international agreements—this relates to the restricted production or trade of internationally regulated substances destined for medical, scientific and/or industrial purposes—and to enhance the ability of the police and the courts to enforce our laws. The bill actually provides for the seizure and forfeiture of property used in offences involving controlled substances.

The existing Narcotic Control Act and the Food and Drugs Act do not deal effectively with emerging trends in drug abuse. These trends point to the increasing availability of new illicit or new designer drugs which, under current law, can escape effective control.

Under the aegis of the drug strategy, the government remains committed to a working partnership whose “raison d’être” is the reduction of drug abuse in Canada.

(1220)

[*English*]

The controlled drugs and substances bill is an integral part of the strategy. It consolidates, modernizes, enhances and streamlines drug abuse provisions contained in the two current laws. Simply put, it builds on the government’s current policy on drug abuse.

Those who profit from this are undeniably resourceful, determined and cunning. Their methods, their tactics and their products are forever undergoing change. We need flexible legislation which allows those on the front lines of enforcement to adapt quickly to these new developments as they occur.

For example, one of the more recent developments in the drug underworld is the production and illicit sale of so-called designer drugs and look alike drugs. Designer drugs are potent substances with slightly different chemical structures than substances presently controlled by the Food and Drugs Act and the Narcotic Control Act, substances like stimulants, tranquilizers and pain killers. These drugs affect abusers in similar ways and can lead to the same health and social problems produced by more conventional drugs.

Look alike drugs, on the other hand, are substances made to resemble illegal drugs. The manufacturers of these malicious offerings can mimic the more powerful drugs. Much harm can result from the abuse of these drugs and primary targets of these merchants of misery are often school-age children.

The manufacture and sale of designer drugs and look alike drugs can be a very profitable business. Sadly, it is a business with terrible consequences for hundreds of thousands of customers, many of them young people.

Under the current Food and Drugs Act and the Narcotic Control Act, drugs must first be listed on a schedule to the act. This regulates the conditions for the sale of that particular substance in Canada. Only once a given substance is listed can it become an offence to sell it. To correct this deficiency the controlled drugs and substances bill proposes interpretive clauses to include these substances.

Under this proposed act, new illicit drugs appearing on the street which fit this description will be covered automatically.

The bill also permits the control of precursors. Precursors are chemical substances used to produce controlled substances. New provisions contained in this bill will enable authorities to regulate the import and export of these substances.

Other sources of drugs sold on the street are substances intended for medical or scientific use. They may be stolen from a hospital, obtained through illegal prescriptions, secured by obtaining numerous prescriptions from different doctors for the same ailment, or via a forged prescription. People who deal in diverted pharmaceutical drugs are collecting very large profits.

The bill enhances present controls that deal with this issue. Under this bill the monitoring of the distribution of drugs will continue.

[*Translation*]

To ensure compliance with the law and prevent diversion, inspectors, in close co-operation with law enforcement authorities would continue to visit pharmacies, hospitals, licensed dealers, dispensing practitioners, researchers and laboratory analysts.

We know there exists a criminal element which is using more and more sophisticated networks to illegally produce, sell, export or import controlled substances in Canada.

These people buy property and consumer goods to further their criminal activities and bolster their personal wealth.

As I see it, such people should be prevented from retaining illegally obtained capital and goods.

The bill before us today, together with the proceeds of crime legislation, strikes at the heart of criminal enterprise.

Together, these enactments will enable the courts to strip criminals of profits and property illegally amassed through drug dealing.

Trends in illegal production, distribution and use of controlled substances change frequently and quickly.

This bill is designed to deal with current problems and to anticipate future needs. There is no doubt that there is a very real problem of drug abuse in Canada.

(1225)

It causes death, injury and illness; leads to lost productivity in the workplace; is a burden on our health care system; and, increasingly, puts a strain on our courts and police forces.

In spite of these glaring facts, some people still doubt that drug abuse is a real concern for the majority of Canadians. They imagine that it is a local problem, affecting relatively few teenagers, primarily among low-income groups in large cities. It is true that it is not possible to measure accurately the full scope of drug abuse in Canada.

What the statistics fail to show are the personal and social costs—in a word the real costs. We can only guess what the real costs of abuse are: the loss of the potential achievements of our youth; the crippling of promising professional careers; the painful destruction of homes and families; the costly disruption of productive communities. These are the disturbing facts of life in virtually every corner of the nation.

Fifteen per cent of teenagers using cannabis. The total number of Canadians using cocaine—500,000 persons. These facts, as unsettling as they are, deserve our attention. They deserve our attention as legislators.

[English]

More important, they deserve our attention as parents, family, friends, colleagues and neighbours to those in need, for nobody is immune. I believe the bill proposes a significant strengthening of our current legislative framework.

At the present time three levels of government spend millions of dollars each year on drug law enforcement. In spite of these enormous expenditures, the fact is that police forces and the courts are hampered by outdated provisions in the laws they seek to uphold.

I welcome debate on the bill. While there are bound to be differences of opinion, I believe this bill merits, nonetheless, the support of members on all sides of the House. In bringing the bill forward I am asking on behalf of the crown that we as members of this place do our part to help equip the government with a new set of tools that will allow us to get on with the job at hand.

It may well be that striving for a drug free society is an unrealistic if laudable goal. Given what is at stake I submit that Canadians expect us to act.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker,

### Routine Proceedings

there have been some consultations between the parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

I want to say very briefly how much I appreciate the co-operation that has been shown on this very delicate issue on all sides of the House. This is concurrence in the report concerning prayers.

I should note for the record that there was a question raised the other day by the hon. member for Saint John who is ill and unable to be here today. She has heard this prayer and agrees with it. I have consulted with many members on all sides of the House including the hon. member for Hamilton West in respect of this issue.

I think there is agreement that this be adopted. I am pleased to move this motion for concurrence this afternoon and I thank all hon. members for their co-operation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Are we now at the tabling of the motion imposing the new prayer upon us? The hon. member asked for unanimous consent; we would be happy to give it, provided that those who would want to say a few words about this new version of the prayer could do so.

(1230)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I wonder if the Chair could ask for the assistance of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and of all members. Would there be unanimous consent for members to make interventions—and I would hope brief interventions—with regard to this motion? Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, I commend the committee for having thought about a new prayer. It seems to me that the traditional one was old-fashioned and had to be updated, since nowadays members of this House practice different religions.

However, I am surprised and I personally disagree with a specific part of the prayer, but as a member of my caucus, I will go along with the majority's wishes. What I disagree with is the reference to Her Most Gracious Majesty.

*Routine Proceedings*

When I am sitting in the House, I am very surprised to see all the members from the other parties stand up and very loudly express their pride in being Canadian. Yet, as soon as there is a symbol that would reflect this pride in being Canadian, what do we do? We use the Queen of England. We do not say the government speech, but the throne speech. We do not have a typical Canadian signing a bill, we have royal assent. We always use the symbol of Great Britain. Are we a colonized people? Or are we an independent country? That is the problem that I have with this prayer.

It is ironic that a member from the Bloc Québécois would have to remind the others parties in the House that they are Canadian. They are not a colony of England, they are Canadian. In fact, all the symbols that they have as Canadians often come from the French reality.

We have sung *Ô Canada* in French for one hundred years, while you were singing *God Save the Queen*. After a hundred years, you started to sing it too, in English, and you made it the national anthem. We asked for a flag for 50 years, but you preferred the red ensign. We wanted Canadian symbols, because we were of French descent.

I am often told: You are more committed to the Quebec flag than to the Canadian flag. Of course I am, because ever since the 1950s, we have identified with that flag, we did not have any other. Everywhere we looked we saw the British flag.

I am surprised that at a time when you have the opportunity to declare yourself Canadian, at a time where you could choose a Canadian symbol for the prayer which starts the day in this House, you decide to beseech the Queen of England. I cannot understand—

**Mr. Milliken:** She is also the Queen of Canada.

**Mr. Plamondon:** Really? She is also the Queen of Canada, says my colleague. Of course, she is a symbol, a tradition, she is part of our history. Is it not high time that you adopt your own symbols, if you are truly Canadian, if you really want your own identity?

Every time someone in the Bloc makes a reference to a sovereign Quebec or something like that, you rise and claim that you are Canadian. I am surprised.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I would like to remind all members that they should address themselves to the Chair. When “you” is used in English, or “vous” in French, something may be lost.

Would the hon. member for Richelieu like to conclude?

**Mr. Plamondon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking through the Chair is a fine Canadian tradition and I respect it with pleasure.

I was about to conclude on the prayer issue and I did not make this remark in an aggressive way.

(1235)

It is just a thought. It is just something I have noted every day over the nine years I have been in this House. Each time you have the opportunity to adopt Canadian symbols, you fail to do so. The fact is that British symbols always come back, with words like royal assent, The Queen in the prayer, the throne speech, and so on.

Of course, I agree that we have to modernize the prayer, but again I just wanted to conclude my remarks on this note.

[*English*]

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, I have not prepared a speech but I served on the procedure and House affairs committee and was somewhat involved in this process. It is a very delicate issue that affects not only members in the House but all Canadians in a very deep and meaningful way.

I commend all members of all parties involved in the discussion and the process. I know it is impossible to please everyone, but I find this prayer acknowledges an almighty God. I believe this was important to the members on the committee and I believe it will be acceptable to Canadians. It also reflects our system of government, the fact that we are functioning in a parliamentary system. It also reflects that we do want to serve Canadians. We want to see our country prosper and go forward.

The process also allows for a time of reflection which I think is very important. It allows people of all faiths—and certainly I know Reformers strongly support the concept—the right to freedom of religion. By this means all members of the House are able to reflect in a way that they deem most appropriate.

Therefore, although I do not expect there is unanimous agreement that it is 100 per cent perfect in its construction, I believe that all members who look at this format believe the process is there so that they can effectively reflect and pray at the beginning of each session of the House. It properly reflects the make-up and nature of Canada.

Therefore I think there is general agreement among Reformers in the House that we would be very happy to proceed with this new structure for our Speaker's prayer.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment if I may because I participated in the proceedings of that committee. Let me remind the House of some elements that were already announced concerning what we call Prayers.

We have been debating the question for several years and I think the committee has done a magnificent job in trying to unite everyone around one fundamental form of prayer. We all know that Prayers open every sitting of the House; what we have now constitutes a great improvement compared to the previous text which made some members ill at ease on religious grounds.

You know the Chair must open every sitting by determining if there is a quorum before starting to say prayers. Given the general discomfort among members, the committee could not accept that a few of them feel unconcerned by these first moments of the sitting of the House and have no other recourse but to stay outside if they do not feel involved in what is going on. This is the first element of importance.

Our objective was then to include all elected members in the discussions and that prompted us to prepare a text almost free of any references to specific religious beliefs and acceptable to almost everybody. All members also had to feel the House was their place and that this activity was meant for them. Of course my colleague mentioned the reference to the Queen, but above all, our aim was to design a moment of reflection intended for all members of the House.

We are practicing democracy at its best here today in trying to recognize all religions and I think this is very positive and valuable, even more so when you think that prayers do not necessarily have to be a formal text; that is an argument I presented to the committee.

(1240)

We know that any prayer is something very personal, it is a conversation with what each of us calls God, but one's own personal God, according to one's own values. In that perspective, we are extremely satisfied that all faiths are recognized here through what I would call multiple persuasions.

The second element is that the intimate nature of prayers is recognized by the moment of silence each member of this House will respect and, in so doing, will feel concerned by the very first opening instants of each sitting of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It was agreed unanimously to make brief remarks. If we do not have unanimous consent on the motion proposed by the member from Kingston and the Islands, I could suggest that there be further negotiations.

**Mr. Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, we are ready. Of course, you do not have to beg us to speak about prayers. We are ready to give unanimous consent, as we have already said. We can go on with the debate or agree unanimously to adjourn at 2.30 p.m. without any extension of the sitting. If I have the Government House leader's promise to that effect, we will stop pleading.

[English]

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker if there is unanimous consent right now to adopt the motion presented by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader, I would be happy to give a commitment that this House will not sit past 2.30 and will adjourn at that time. Again, that is on the condition there is unanimous consent given

### *Government Orders*

immediately for passing this motion and we return to second reading debate of Bill C-7.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Members have heard the terms of the motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, insofar as the Government House leader gives us his word that we will adjourn at 2.30 p.m., we agree to give unanimous consent to have the vote on the prayer. We are more than willing to do so.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, drug trafficking, possession and intoxication is a very serious problem that modern society must face. We all know that adults, teenagers and even children get intoxicated with and addicted to drugs. We also know that criminal distribution networks not only provide drugs to addicted people but every day drag people of all ages down into the hell of drugs.

This is why I ask all those who are watching to listen carefully to what I say. If you have a videotape recorder, I advise you to record what I am about to say.

[English]

What we are going to talk about should interest everyone. People may think there is nothing exciting in the new bill. That is not so today.

[Translation]

As a matter of fact, during the next 40 minutes we will be dealing with issues that are of interest to everyone, honest people, sick people, health professionals, law enforcement people but also those who produce, distribute, possess and use drugs. We will be talking about Bill C-7.

(1245)

This bill deals with certain drugs, their precursors and other substances. It was tabled in the House of Commons and passed the first reading stage on February 2. The passing of this bill at third reading would result in the Narcotic Control Act, and certain sections of parts III and IV of the Food and Drugs Act, being repealed.

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It is important to note that Bill C-7 is, for all intents and purposes, identical to Bill C-85, an Act respecting the control of psychoactive substances, which was tabled by the Conservative government on June 11, 1992. That bill passed the first and second reading stages on June 11, 1992 and May 6, 1993. The committee tabled its report on June 3, 1993. Bill C-85 died on the Order Paper when the elections were called.

Bill C-7 is part of the national drug strategy. It consolidates and adds to the provisions of the Narcotic Control Act, and of Parts III and IV of the Food and Drugs Act. Last but not least, Bill C-7 would enact certain provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, dating back to 1961, and of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Both international conventions were ratified by Canada.

The Bloc Québécois believes it is necessary for Canada and Quebec to be able to adequately and efficiently control narcotic drugs on their territories. Consequently, the Bloc Québécois recognizes that legislating to that end is an obvious necessity.

Let us quickly review the situation as it is presently in Canada. At the present time, under the Narcotic Control Act and the Food and Drugs Act, drugs must be listed in a schedule to the act for their sale on the streets to become an offence. Consequently, new drugs are not considered illegal as long as they have not been analysed and added to a schedule. This process takes a lot of time. Meanwhile, people who use these substances, and society in general, may and do suffer grave prejudices.

It should be noted that Bill C-7 includes the provisions of the present legislation. Under clause 2 we find the same definition of the word "sale" as including distribution, whether it is made for consideration or not, that is to say free of charge.

Certain provisions, however, have been added. For example, besides manufacturing, synthesizing, cultivating, propagating and harvesting, "produce" also includes offer to produce, as mentioned in clause 2.

Moreover, according to clause 3(1), a substance included in the schedules is deemed to include not only any substance capable of producing an effect similar to that of a substance included in these schedules, but also any substance represented or held out as such by the purchaser, whether acting in good faith or not.

Thus, every person who, whether acting in good faith or not, traffics in a substance represented or held out as a substance included in the schedules, is guilty of an indictable offence or of a punishable offence, pursuant to clause 6(1), (3) and (5).

The mere act of possessing, for the purpose of trafficking, even if no money is involved, a substance included in the schedules, is an indictable offence or an offence punishable under clause 6(2) and (3). The bill provides for harsher penalties

for substances included in schedule I and the severity decreases from one schedule to another. It should be noted that cannabis is listed in schedule I. Every person producing cannabis, no matter to what extent, is guilty of an indictable offence liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years, under clause 8(2)(b).

(1250)

[English]

This being said, is Bill C-7 substantially different from actual laws in regard to unlawful drug distribution? No, not at all.

[Translation]

It is important to make this statement to correct any other perception which some may have had following the recent comments made by the Solicitor General.

Indeed, on February 15, the Solicitor General said to journalists that Bill C-7 was the best way to curb cocaine smuggling activities by warriors on aboriginal territories. These comments tend to imply that current laws are not sufficient to adequately fight this traffic.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Like Bill C-7, the existing Narcotic Control Act makes the smuggling, importation and exportation of drugs a criminal activity. That act also says that it is illegal to have goods directly or indirectly linked to the commission of an offence, in or outside Canada.

Bill C-7 only adds the notions of conspiracy and attempt to commit an offence. The same is true in the case of laundering proceeds of certain offences. The powers to search, seize and detain are very clearly defined in the existing act.

Therefore, it appears that the legislation already provides the Solicitor General with all the necessary tools to intervene now on aboriginal territories to stop cocaine smuggling by warriors.

As for the Solicitor General's statement to the effect that Bill C-7 will allow police to make controlled sales, thereby allowing undercover agents to infiltrate smuggling rings and catch criminals by proposing deals, I wonder if that is anything new. Indeed, the power to investigate already allows police to conduct undercover activities and make controlled sales.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the Solicitor General would try to use Bill C-7 to buy time and delay any action against smugglers who use aboriginal territories for their operations. The fact is that current laws contain all the necessary provisions to allow the Solicitor General to make a move. To claim anything else would only confirm that there is no political will to act, which cannot decently be true, naturally.

Having said this, I think we should question how effective Bill C-7 will be once it comes into force.

*Government Orders*

For instance, how many more people are expected to be arrested and convicted thanks to this bill? Who do we expect to arrest and convict? What kind of a reduction in trafficking and use is expected? Finally, will the judicial system be able to absorb the extra caseload? And what is provided in this law for the unfortunate people who have become addicted to drugs? Answers to these questions are either non-existent or unsatisfactory, as we will demonstrate in this debate.

Indeed, we consider that Bill C-7 has several significant flaws and not only ignores the parameters to be defined in effective drug control strategy but also opens the door to some major adverse effects. In the time at our disposal, my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and I will try to express our concerns so that this House and the general public can consider this bill in the light of accepted modern values.

The flaws that we have identified in Bill C-7 can be grouped under four questions. First, are legitimate activities of physicians, pharmacists, vets and dentists properly protected against abusive application of the legislation and especially against regulations the scope of which we do not know at the moment?

(1255)

Second, will the significant powers granted to inspectors, to be designated directly by the minister, not possibly lead to some errors which could unduly penalize health professionals and their patients? Will Canadians be able to take on the added responsibilities arising from this bill? And is this bill in line with the rights and privileges of provincial governments, especially Quebec?

Third, how will the confidentiality of medical records be ensured when the bill allows absolutely anyone designated as an inspector by the minister to reproduce documents found in a physician's office or in a pharmacy and to seize electronic data.

Fourth and foremost, why are drug-dependent persons who need to be treated and not jailed considered criminals in this bill?

I will now address each one of these issues in order to determine the provisions which need to be improved and which are, in our opinion, crucial for the purpose of this Act and for avoiding disastrous secondary consequences.

Let us begin with our first concern. Are legitimate activities of physicians, pharmacists, vets and dentists properly protected against an abusive application of this act and especially against regulations the scope of which we do not know at the moment?

I would like to remind hon. members that the Canadian Medical Association expressed its concerns, last May, before the legislative committee on Bill C-85, because physicians will have no way of knowing which activities are legal or illegal

before the regulations have been promulgated. Hence, they do not have all the information they need to properly examine this bill. In fact, since regulations can be amended by the bureaucracy, how can physicians and their patients be informed of such changes? The lack of information in the bill on which medication will be controlled also added to their feeling of uncertainty.

For example, the Canadian Medical Association was concerned about the definition of practitioner in clause 2, which is left to the regulations, especially for the purpose of the definition "provide" in section 54z.1.

We understand that the purpose of Bill C-7 is not to cause problems for health care professionals or their patients. However, it has recently come to our attention that the Canadian Medical Association clearly indicated that the bill requires some clarification so as not to cause undue prejudice to medical practitioners.

Dr. Barry Adams, chairman of the Council on Health Care and Promotion of the Canadian Medical Association, had this to say when he appeared before the legislative committee last May, and I quote:

The Canadian Medical Association is extremely concerned about the changes brought about by this legislation, because some seem to be directed at legitimate patient and physician activities. Our concerns are twofold. First, the changed definitions of some offences will have direct and undesirable consequences for physicians in their daily practices, and also for their patients. Second, the new regulatory powers will inappropriately and ineffectively regulate the prescribing practices of physicians, and will give increased access to confidential patient information.

*[English]*

We share those important concerns expressed by the Canadian Medical Association. In particular, we are seriously concerned by the important modifications that will affect all individuals treated by two or more doctors.

(1300)

*[Translation]*

Is indeed guilty of an indictable offence or of a punishable offence a person who, having obtained within the preceding thirty days a substance included in the schedules or an authorization to obtain such a substance, neglects to mention that fact to a practitioner from whom that person obtains or seeks to obtain any substance included in the schedules or an authorization to obtain it.

The Canadian Medical Association points out that this new provision applies not only to patients who consult two doctors within a period of thirty days but also to any person obtaining or seeking to obtain a drug from a person authorized to provide it. This would include doctors who are obtaining or seeking to obtain drugs for legitimate medical reasons as well as every patient wanting to treat real symptoms.

*Government Orders**[English]*

The Canadian Medical Association stresses that the law does not clearly define what is unlawful. Consequently an individual would have to know if he or she is authorized to request drugs and who is an authorized drug supplier.

This creates an unacceptable uncertainty for the doctors as well as for their patients.

*[Translation]*

Does that mean, for instance, Mr. Speaker, that you and I and everyone will have to memorize the schedules to the act in order to avoid committing an offence unwittingly? If such a substance was legitimately injected while unconscious in a hospital, would it be a crime to neglect to mention that to the pharmacist you are asking to fill a prescription for that substance or any other substance included in the schedules?

Does that mean that every one of us, in Quebec as well as in Canada, will have to ask our doctor or pharmacist for a list of everything that is prescribed, sold or administered to us, and a list of the drugs a third party has been authorized to sell or to administer to us, whether or not that sale or administration happened? If clause 5(2) of the bill was to be taken literally, the nightmare I just outlined would become a definite possibility.

*[English]*

To those who think that no one in his right mind would apply the law so strictly and so foolishly, my answer is we should know better.

*[Translation]*

Unfortunately, there is no doubt somebody will choose to enforce the act rigidly and blindly, if given the opportunity to do so. The only thing that remains to be seen is where and when and, above all, who the unfortunate victim will be! It is our responsibility in this House to have a bill that is crystal clear and deals with the true goals to be achieved and leaves law-abiding citizens and pharmacists alone. The House should legislate and not leave it to well-intentioned bureaucrats to regulate.

There is another concern due to the fact that patients are included in the definitions given in the bill. In this context, we should consider the case of pain-relieving drugs used to spare unnecessary pain to the sick, the chronically ill and terminally ill cancer patients. If, under this bill, the physician must ask himself each and every time he writes a prescription whether he is breaking the law or not, then Mr. Speaker, I ask you: How many sick persons will be denied the drugs they really need?

The bill must be explicit and make a clear-cut distinction between an unlawful behaviour on the part of a physician and a questionable way of prescribing drugs.

The medical association emphasized also that it was not sure the federal government could legitimately regulate the prescription and administration of drugs by physicians to their patients. Moreover, it is far from certain that the enforcement mechanism will be effective. It thinks that the use of penal law to regulate quality in health care is counterproductive and inconsistent with modern management theory.

Mr. Speaker, I notice I still have a lot more notes to go through. How much time do I have left?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In my opinion, you still have 15 to 18 minutes, that is until 1.20 p.m.

(1305)

**Mr. de Savoye:** Mr. Speaker, I would now like to tell you about the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association, which also testified last May. The president of that association, Mr. Leroy Fevang, said: "We have four concerns: the uncertainty about the type of substances which will be affected by the bill; the extent of the administration and enforcement powers provided by the bill; the possibility that the bill will force pharmacists to give information in such a way as to almost incriminate themselves; and the uncertainty caused by the lack of information on the nature of the regulations and the lack of any mention of medication in the bill. The Canadian Pharmaceutical Association wants the act to specify clearly what substances a pharmacist can legally handle".

The association also wondered how we should define "stimulant effect". Do we even have a standard to measure it? If one definition could cover everything, would there be exemptions for people who can have unusual reactions? Who would decide what is a so-called psychotropic substance? How would this information be given to pharmacists in order to help them to start exercising some control over those substances?

The association mentioned, for example, the risk which a pharmacist would incur in selling or packaging over-the-counter drugs that are not listed in the act and have minor or unexpected effects that can be associated with psychotropic properties.

I will now discuss the second aspect, and I am referring to the wide-ranging powers given to inspectors appointed directly by the minister, powers which I think will perhaps not encourage but at least open the door to errors that would unduly penalize health professionals and their patients. Will the public be able to deal with the new responsibilities it has under this bill? And how can this legislation co-exist with the prerogatives of Quebec and the provinces for dealing with their respective jurisdictions?

Bill C-7 appears to grant quasi inquisitorial powers to the minister, through inspectors, adjudicators and justices. Last year, the Legislative Committee on Bill C-85 wondered whether the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Rights and Liberties Federation would have something to say

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about the compatibility of measures provided in the bill with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, especially in matters concerning the Criminal Code.

For instance, the committee had some questions about searches without a warrant. It seems that in 1984, in the Hunder and Southam case, the court ruled that a warrant was necessary, except under very special circumstances.

Bill C-7 provides for circumstances in which no warrant is required. It not only does that, but it also says in clause 29(1) that the minister may designate any person, literally any person, as an inspector for the purposes of this Act. These appointees will enjoy quasi inquisitorial powers. These powers are considerable and sufficiently broad to cover any kind of abuse, whether it is accidental, voluntary or the result of a conspiracy.

So the inspector is appointed by the Minister of National Health and Welfare. There are some questions about the minister's discretionary powers in this respect. First of all, this political appointment provides no guarantees that the inspector has the qualifications to perform his duties. Since the minister may designate anyone as an inspector, the appointment may be purely partisan.

The inspector's powers are considerable. According to clause 30(1) of this Act, "an inspector may, to ensure compliance with the regulations, at any reasonable time enter any place used for the purpose of conducting the business or professional practice of any person licensed or otherwise authorized under the regulations to deal in a controlled substance or precursor".

(1310)

[*English*]

This article means that an inspector can visit and thoroughly search your doctor's office or your drugstore and all this without a warrant.

[*Translation*]

We understand that the intent of the bill is to give these powers to the inspector so that he can fulfil his administrative duties. But since the evidence that he accumulates could be used in a criminal court and a search warrant is required for any criminal proceedings unless there are very special circumstances provided for by the law, it seems to us that these circumstances should really be exceptional. However, the inspection powers go way beyond the principle that I just mentioned.

Let me explain to the House what we are talking about. We are talking about clause 30 concerning any person authorized or licensed under the regulations, such as the pharmacist, the doctor or the hospital.

Regarding these people, the search powers of the inspector are practically without any limitations, the warrant often being only required for a dwelling-place. The inspector can visit any place at any time that is convenient to him, he can search and examine any thing, including computerized data, he can use any comput-

er or copying equipment in that place, without any compensation to the person in charge of that place, he can take away with him any thing that he wants and he can use force. Moreover, any person present in the place, including the patient, undoubtedly, is required to help the inspector and to give him any information without interfering with his work, even by omission. And I remind this House that the Minister can literally appoint anybody to that job.

I would like to mention also that this bill infringes on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. According to the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association, under the present system, the provincial governments grant pharmacists licences which allow them to sell and package pharmaceuticals. According to that Association, it is not necessary for the federal government to issue new licences for the sale and packaging of controlled drugs, as this could create duplication and even greater confusion.

Consequently, this bill infringes on provincial jurisdiction. For example, Quebec grants inspection power to the Corporation des médecins. The inspector working for the Corporation can, upon prior notice, visit physicians in their offices to make sure that everything is in agreement with common medical practice.

The Government of Quebec, like the governments of the Canadian provinces, also gives the syndic of the Corporation the power to inspect the practice of a physician when it receives a complaint alleging that the physician prescribed harmful drugs to a patient. This is true for physicians and pharmacists everywhere in Quebec and Canada. This part of the bill would allow the federal government to enter areas of jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

Bill C-7 gives the Minister of Health and the Governor in Council increased powers. Clause 34, for example, gives the Minister, without prior notice to the person believed to have contravened the regulations, the right to make an interim order prohibiting the person from doing anything he or she would otherwise be permitted to do under their licence, permit or authorization. So, without knowing it, a licensee who has not yet received notice of the order issued and continues to carry on with the normal activities permitted under his licence, permit or authorization, becomes an offender.

Similarly, according to clause 43, the minister can designate any person as an analyst for the purposes of analyzing or examining any substance or sample taken by the inspector. As in the case of the inspector, this analyst can be appointed on purely partisan grounds and his appointment is no guarantee of his qualifications.

Another example is clause 55 of Bill C-7 which says the minister may exempt any person or class of persons or any controlled substance or precursor from the application of all or any of the provisions of this act or regulations, for medical or scientific purposes or if it is in the public interest. This ministerial discretion could have a major impact.



*Government Orders*

For example, the minister could feel forced to exempt some controlled substances because of the pressure put on him by scientific or medical lobbies, even though these substances could entail a potential threat to public health.

(1315)

We must not forget that the scientific community can easily carry out research which is contrary to humanistic ethics, all in the name of science and of the sacrosanct well-being of humanity.

This bill also gives the Governor in Council, the cabinet in other words, various powers and authorities with regard to regulations. The Bloc Québécois and all the stakeholders of the health community should therefore carefully examine the regulations that will be tabled.

Clause 54(1) gives the Governor in Council the power to make regulations for carrying out the purposes and provisions of this act, including the regulation of the medical, scientific and industrial uses and distribution of controlled substances and precursors and the enforcement of this act.

Paragraph h) of this clause provides that the Governor in Council may make regulations:

respecting the qualifications of persons engaged in the production, preservation, testing, packaging, storage, selling, providing or otherwise dealing in any controlled substance or precursor or any class thereof;

Yet, in this clause giving major powers to the Governor in Council, we can see that paragraph c) encroaches on one of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. This paragraph provides that the Governor in Council may make regulations:

respecting the issuance, suspension, cancellation, duration and terms and conditions of any class of licence for the importation into Canada, exportation from Canada, production, packaging, sale, provision or administration of any substance included in Schedule I, II, III, IV or V or any class thereof;

We must recall that pharmacists' sales licences are issued by the Government of Quebec and by the provincial governments. This is another case of federal interference in Quebec's and the provinces' areas of jurisdiction.

And while the bill gives some powers that are not obviously necessary, it does not seem to give the powers that would really be needed. Last May, Scott Neward, general counsel of the Canadian Police Association, told the legislative committee that there could be a potential problem. What would happen, he said, if a court objectively decides after the fact that the force used in locating the drugs was not reasonable? Although he admitted that the police could be liable to prosecution for ripping up a floor, he was concerned that the 10 pounds of heroin found under the floor boards could then be ruled inadmissible evidence. He concluded by suggesting that it should be made clear that any

violation relating to that subsection should not affect the admissibility of evidence.

*[English]*

I am sure we all want the law to be without mercy for the so-called druglords, but is Bill C-7 up to that task? I am not so sure. For instance, why is there a double standard concerning cannabis offences? Carefully bear with me.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Paul Saint-Denis, senior counsel for the criminal law policy section of the Department of Justice, made the following remarks when addressing the committee:

The purpose behind creating a hybrid trafficking offence for cannabis was really not geared towards attacking the leaders of drug trafficking groups but rather to deal with the difficulty of court delays. By creating a hybrid trafficking offence for cannabis, it would be possible for prosecutors to prosecute by way of a summary conviction, and thereby reduce or eliminate access to jury trials and to preliminary hearings, thereby cutting down considerably on court delays. The entire purpose behind creating the hybrid trafficking offence for cannabis was not to attack drug trafficking ringleaders but rather to deal with the fairly complex issue of court delays, part of which is the result of mounting trafficking offences which linger in the courts because of the time it takes for them to get through the court process.

Obviously, this bill has not been properly thought through. It could potentially disturb honest people's peace of mind. We are rightfully questioning its ability to reduce drug use and trafficking.

I will stop for a moment. I voiced my concern earlier and attempted to speed up, but I still have a few pages left to read. I wonder if the House would allow me to go over my allotted time.

(1320)

*[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Members have heard the request of the hon. member for Portneuf who anticipates exceeding his 40-minute time limit on his intervention on Bill C-7. Is there unanimous consent to allow the member to extend his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. de Savoye:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I thank the House.

*[English]*

The House will remember that our third issue was medical file confidentiality. How can medical file confidentiality not be threatened by a law that literally allows an inspector to copy your file in a doctor's office or in a drugstore or even in a hospital and further allows this guy to get at your computerized data?

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

Allow me to quote once again the Canadian Medical Association. This organization is very concerned about some of the changes proposed in this bill, namely those which seem to take aim at legitimate activities conducted by medical doctors. Among other things, the new regulatory process will ensure easier access to the confidential files of patients.

I am also quite concerned to hear the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association say, again through Dr. Leroy Fevang, that it co-operated with the Bureau of Dangerous Drugs to develop a single electronic standard for computerized prescription delivery, in order to simplify the setting up of a data base on drug consumers.

Such a data base would provide detailed information on the pharmacotherapeutic history of any individual and, consequently, on his or her physiological and mental profiles. Is this really the object of Bill C-7? Of course not! Therefore, this legislation must be redrafted so as to allow what is useful and necessary, while prohibiting what is not and what constitutes undue and unacceptable intrusion into the private lives of honest citizens.

[English]

May I now tackle our fourth issue? Although it is the last I believe it to be the most important one. I ask this House: Why does this law make criminals out of addicted people who need to be medically treated rather than jailed?

[Translation]

Indeed, Bill C-7 makes criminals not only of those who are involved in drug smuggling, but also of those who use the drugs. Instead of treating those who suffer from a dependency, the law makes criminals of them. Thus, Bill C-7 is a tool to control and suppress crime rather than to promote health. In fact, prevention and rehabilitation are two concepts on which this bill is absolutely silent.

We all know that the illegal consumption of drugs results in the commission of various offences by those who have developed this kind of dependency. Some must steal and even prostitute themselves to be able to afford the daily dose which their sick body is so dependent upon. What slavery!

Where do they steal? Very often in our homes, where they take electronic appliances and jewellery which they quickly resell at a very low price to receiver networks. These poor people are sick but, because they are afraid to incriminate themselves, they cannot seek medical treatment and are therefore condemned to steal in order to satisfy their drug addiction. They have become the absolute slaves of drug dealers who grow richer with the loot stolen by these unfortunates.

That is the real problem. We must help these people, prisoners of their drug addiction. Once there are no more drug addicts, drug dealers will have to close shop. Alas, this bill does not show any concern about rehabilitating people found in possession of drugs. In particular, this bill aims at suppressing the drug trade. While it provides for the imposition of fines for possession of narcotics, there is no mention of providing access to rehabilitation programs.

(1325)

The focus of Bill C-7 is controlling supply of drugs. It completely neglects the need to control demand, as well as aspects such as prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

The May 27, 1993 issue of the *Globe and Mail* contained an article by Professors Usprich and Solomon about the bill now before this House. The article states the following: "—the new legislation fails to address the vast majority of the problems that stem from the existing legislation and raises many new concerns. The proposed legislation is more complex and impenetrable than previous laws. The bill maintains the punitive nature of the law which is based on preconceptions which the findings of the LeDain Commission should have done away with once and for all twenty years ago. In its present form, the bill makes drug addiction a crime".

In addition, Dr. Reginald G. Smart, Chief of Social Epidemiology at the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Research Foundation, has this to say: "Many drug addicts in need of treatment end up in jail for possession of narcotics. We do not have in place a diversion process which would enable judges to give the accused a choice between jail or a treatment program. Our laws do not allow for this kind of choice, whereas such an approach is commonplace in many other countries in the world".

If we put a drug addict in jail, not only will we have a miserable, sick prisoner, but it will cost us an added \$70,000 per year for most of his life. A withdrawal treatment and a rehabilitation program would only cost a few thousands dollars and would return to society an individual capable of greatly contributing to his or her community.

Do not tell me that this concern will be addressed in another bill. We have before the House Bill C-7, which can and should legislate in such areas as rehabilitation and withdrawal treatment. Thousands of our young and not so young fellow citizens, who are trapped by their drug habit, cannot wait any longer.

One more thing before I conclude. I want to mention two well-known psychotropic substances which have been left out of this bill. They are, predictably, nicotine and alcohol. Even though Canada and Quebec have always been relatively tolerant about the use of such substances, the population is very aware of the fact that nicotine is harmful, causes serious health problems and reduces the quality of life and life expectancy of people.

*Government Orders*

As for alcohol, driving a vehicle with .08 per cent or more of that substance in your blood is already a criminal offence. I wonder then if this would not be the right time to recognize the true nature of these substances and include them in Bill C-7 with observations that would reflect our modern tolerance and awareness.

In conclusion, we acknowledge the necessity of legislation like that proposed in Bill C-7 in order to control drug possession and trafficking. However, we strenuously insist that the bill should also deal with rehabilitation and detoxification.

Finally, it is of paramount importance that Bill C-7 be explicit about the legitimate activities of health professionals and patients. We should not rely on regulations to specify what should appear in the act itself. Furthermore the bill we must provide an adequate framework for the powers it confers to individuals and institutions.

Accordingly, we recommend that Bill C-7 be referred to the Standing Committee on Health which should revise its content in view of our concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your kind attention, and I thank the hon. members of this House for theirs.

[English]

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** Mr. Speaker, it was my intention when I started to address Bill C-7 to speak to the positives in it. However, I must admit that the best laid plans of this member to find something positive about this bill have gone astray, just like the contents of this bill.

(1330)

The intent of this bill was a noble enterprise definitely needed in today's society. Instead of taking the time and making the effort to properly research, plan and develop a bill that would fulfil today's needs, this government has simply borrowed Bill C-85 from the previous government, made some cosmetic changes and put this bill forward as its own.

With laziness comes regret and the regret here is that the government was lazy. The only saving grace in this bill is finally a government is addressing the use of weapons, drug dealing near schools, and is requesting judges to offer written reasons for not incarcerating those convicted of using weapons in drug deals or dealing drugs near schools.

I will outline the faults with this bill as I see them. This government would have members of this House pass a bill before the regulations outlining what is permissible are even published.

Those regulations are needed in conjunction with Criminal Code rulings so that Canadians are aware of what is legal process. Ignorance of the law is not an admissible defence in court. Under this bill every Canadian would be denied a legal defence in court. They will be ignorant of the legal process until those regulations are known.

The people of Canada should never be governed by regulations. They should be governed only by law. Passing this bill before the regulations are complete and known will entail giving the regulations superiority over law. I cannot support that.

Further, this bill is so poorly written charter challenges leap off the page every time I turn one. Perhaps this government believes that Canadians have not had their fill of being tied up in courts, criminals being set free and large pay cheques for lawyers because of poorly written legislation.

Let me assure this government that belief is wrong. Let me assure this government Canadians want laws and legislation that will stand the charter test. Bill C-7 will have an extremely difficult time doing that.

The Supreme Court ruled in violation of the charter previous legislation having the same errors in construction as section 12 of this bill pertaining to search and seizure. The Supreme Court ruled in violation of the charter previous legislation having the same errors in construction as section 13 pertaining to the necessary force.

Section 34 of this bill allows the minister to remove a person's right to a livelihood such as a druggist or a doctor and then asks them to present a case before an adjudicator.

This bill allows a minister to presume someone is guilty and then asks that person to prove they are innocent.

Do the words Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms strike any note of familiarity with this government? Nowhere in this bill do I see any reference to rehabilitation. I believe this government thinks this side of the House will support any bill offering jail terms for criminals.

Let me assure Canadians we believe in rehabilitation. We believe society and taxpayers are better served by having first time, small quantity possession addicts sent to cost efficient drug rehabilitation centres, offering them hope that they can return to normal life.

(1335)

We believe excluding in this bill any option for rehabilitation is a sad oversight and shows Canadians the only understanding this government has for a judicial review is punitive measures.

How can any Canadian who is a slave to drugs or a slave to drug pushers and organized crime make a decision for a better future when the only option is to remove them from society?

*Government Orders*

This bill shows the true light of this government. This bill not only shows this government has a complete lack of understanding for judicial reform, but this bill also shows this government does not understand the concept of justice. The punishment should meet the crime. According to this government, seeking help for an addiction would be a crime.

No one believes in the right of citizens to feel safe in their homes, in their schools, in their streets and in their communities more than I do. I also believe victims include those who are addicted to these soul-stealing drugs.

Nowhere in this bill do I see where this government allows victims of drug addiction any hope of rehabilitation. I really wanted to support this bill. I really wanted this bill to offer protection to society against designer drugs. What do I see instead? I see a bill that is so poorly written, so broad in language that a charter fight will surely result.

The wording in this bill could cause charges under section 3 for giving someone too much coffee. Caffeine in large amounts creates similar stimulative effects as amphetamines. According to this bill, an attempt to keep a friend awake with several cups of coffee could result in charges.

I do appreciate the intent of this bill and believe legislation must be enacted to address the issues intended, but this bill is not the answer. This bill will create more legal and more social problems than it will ever solve.

It is a shame that this government did not take this issue to the serious extent that is required. This government simply borrowed an inept bill left over from the previous government to address a problem that most Canadians want correctly solved.

This bill confuses regulations with criminal law. It presents far too wide powers for inspectors enforcing regulations, not laws. It offers wide powers that will lead to charter challenges, invalidating any evidence found and letting criminals escape from justice. It offers no hope for rehabilitation. It will force undue hardship on medical practitioners and pharmaceutical corporations.

I must discourage support for this bill. I also must encourage this government to return this ill-conceived and poorly worded bill to the drawing table. Then let the government return to this House with a bill that will stand the test of modern jurisprudence.

At that time I will be more than happy to support a new bill and its intention to bring controlled substances and those who are involved in the trade of controlled substances before the law and to justice.

There are penalty provisions in Bill C-7 for small amounts as severe as large amounts of drugs, except a special provision for cannabis, but sharing cannabis with a friend can equal 14 years, according to this bill.

(1340)

It could cause prescription problems for doctors. Doctors could be charged with trafficking, especially if a substance is not on one of the schedules.

It allows inspectors access to confidential doctor-patient records. It gives the minister the power to impose sentences for substances not yet on schedule, arbitrary power of imprisonment.

The size of this document amazes me. This document, with all its contents and the way it has been written and all the matters that pertain to judicial matters, is then turned over to the health committee to study and to bring back to this House. If I were on the health committee I would wonder why such a document so full of judicial matters would be before us.

Illegal drugs need to be dealt with.

As many members know, I was the principal of a junior-senior high school for 23 years. I have a colleague who is also a principal in Quebec. We could probably share a lot of stories about illegal drugs and what I have seen them do to youth. I have attended many funerals in those 23 years, some of which were the result of drugs and the way they are handled.

I suppose what bothers me more than anything is that over the last two decades or so we from the educational, community and parent levels have asked and continually ask governments and politicians, those in power, to please take charge of the situation and do something about it. It is out of hand, it is getting out of control and it is serious.

I am really disappointed that over the last 23 years I have seen no such progress. If this 35th Parliament would only get the political will and the intestinal fortitude, the courage and the guts it takes, it could take on illegal drugs in the same manner in which it was so brave to take on cigarettes. When they moved in and did those things in such a harsh manner and told the whole world that they meant business it caused the health practitioners throughout the country to cheer and applaud.

When we continually slide by other drugs that cause many serious problems, Canadians wonder when we are going to take the action. Then again, maybe I should not encourage my colleagues on that side of the House to get too much involved in doing this sort of thing just yet. After all, if they want to continue with a lackadaisical attitude they had when they put this bill together and continue to ignore the wishes and desires of Canadians, that should probably make me happy. If that kind of attitude continues they will be occupying some seats on this side of the House after the next election because Canadians are not going to stand for that any longer.

There are problems out there and we are saying that is too bad.

*Government Orders*

I remember going to the police and how they agreed with me that one individual, an adult, was responsible for trafficking most of the drugs in the small town I was in. Every time they got close to bringing this person under the thumb of the law, some kind of technicality or charter challenge would prevent that. In frustration we could only talk about how we could overcome that kind of a situation.

(1345)

Yet what I see today is a document that is full of the opportunity to continually cause more and more charter challenges. Why do we not get away from that? Or, do we all have some kind of stock or interest in a law firm and the busier we keep our lawyers the fatter their wallets get and the less we do for society?

Many members make a mockery of these words. It is too bad they were not at some of the funerals I was talking about. It is too bad they were not there to watch the 14-year old blow his own brains out under the influence of a drug over which he had no control. It is too bad they do not get a little closer to the people as politicians to get a little more feel of what they are trying to tell us. Once they understand and get a feeling for it, they will understand why I desire getting something done.

Things can go right when a 34-year old man is caught and charged for trafficking drugs in a small community in my riding. Everybody cheers because students in the area are the ones who were being supplied by the individual. They are glad he has finally been caught. However, there is something terribly wrong when three weeks later, after going to court and being charged under due process of law, he is out in the same town doing the same thing. It is just one example of thousands: a little tap on the wrist and "don't do that again".

I will repeat. If the government had the political will, the courage and the guts, I guarantee it would have the approval of the Canadian people to take action. The government should get with it. I will join it and be pleased to work with it to come up with documents that will make sense and put an end to this problem. This is not a Liberal problem. This is not a Reform problem or a Bloc problem. This is a Canadian problem affecting our youth. When brain burning drugs are free and easy in our society it is time we started doing something about it.

I had the privilege of going on prison missions once every month for a number of years. The prison where I served my missions was the Bowden Institute in my riding, a federal maximum security prison. I find it amazing that in our penal system it is easier to get access to drugs than it is on the streets. When I went on missions to the prison sometimes it was very difficult to counsel some of the individuals I was scheduled to counsel. They were already high or had come down off of a high because of drugs they had been using while in prison. They are readily available to them.

Sometimes we as politicians continually challenge our penal system to rehabilitate, to fix these fellows up. Instead of turning out rehabilitated people from these prisons we are turning out more addicted individuals into society, saying that they have been in the penal system and should be able to walk out into society and function well. However they are already addicted.

What kind of a system would allow that to continue? It should never be a Canadian system. It can be fixed and we need to fix it. But do we have the courage? Does the government have the will? So far I have not seen an example of it.

(1350)

I am waiting for somebody to do something other than come down with a massive document that is full of irregularities, full of things that will cause nothing but more grief and more problems. Would it be possible to break this document down so that we have a judicial section and a health section?

I would imagine it would drive the health committee right up the wall when it comes to dealing with the judicial aspect. Being on the judicial committee, I certainly would not be comfortable dealing with this document when it comes to all the health aspects. It is a quick and easy way to brush it aside. They can make sure they take care of it and then go out and brag to everybody in their ridings about the wonderful bill they have passed. It is not worth the paper it is written on. It accomplishes nothing toward long-term drug rehabilitation and putting a stop to illegal selling and trafficking.

When a country has billions of dollars in revenues from activities such as illegal drugs, is it something to be proud of? Do members want to run to another country somewhere and say that they are from Canada and our fourth biggest industry is drugs? Is that wonderful? Wherever it fits in, members can be assured it is very high on the ladder.

Are members going to do their jobs in Parliament as people who have been asked to address these problems on behalf of Canadians throughout the country? Members could do it. For once they could focus on the victims and potential victims out there, waiting to fall into the trap created by the crime that is going on.

I looked at certain areas throughout the world. Singapore was one. I understand from the statistics that it is down to 5 per cent. In my last year of school I was fortunate to have a 17-year old exchange student from Singapore for six weeks. I asked him whether there was a drug problem in Singapore schools. He said: "Not on your life. If you get caught with drugs, bang, you are dead". I said: "Really?" It sounds pretty barbaric, does it not? Singapore has a 5 per cent problem or hardly any problem. There is no problem in the schools. It certainly is not causing a health problem. Traffickers are fearful of being in that country.

*Government Orders*

However I am afraid trafficking in this country is very inviting. When I visited the prison at Drumheller I was amazed by the numbers of drug traffickers from other countries who were there for short terms. For some of them to open their mouths and say the reason they are in Canada is that it is a haven for traffickers ought to be a message. They believe the easiest and most logical place to work is in a country like Canada that has namby-pamby rules when it comes to catching people like them.

They can do something about it. Do they have the will? Do they have the courage? May God grant it to them because it needs to be done and it needs to be done now.

It has even been suggested to me by a few that the real answer to our problems is that we need to legalize some of these drugs. Hogwash. Who would ever suggest such an idea? They should shake their heads and think again. Then they come back and say: "But prohibition never worked". Maybe it did not, to whatever extent they are talking about, but I can guarantee that when alcohol was finally legalized—and I do not think anybody would have to work too hard to research and verify this—it was one of the problems that caused more divorces than anything else.

(1355)

What is causing more financial breakups? Alcohol. What is causing more bankruptcies? Alcohol. Why are more people in prison than ever before, 70 to 80 per cent of them? Alcohol. Was it a great and wonderful deal to legalize alcohol? Were we good? Now we want to turn around and consider doing the same kind of thing to these other drugs.

To those who would even suggest that we consider legalizing these kinds of drugs I say: "Move away from me immediately or we will have a serious argument". There is no way, after seeing what I have seen through the experiences I have had with the youth of the country, that I would say for a single second legalization of drugs is what we need.

In Canada we need law and order. We need legislators who will say it is time to make the country safer. We can do it and they are the people to do it. They had better find the courage and guts to do it. If it is not done it will continually get worse and we will regret the day that members of the 35th Parliament sat back in their chairs like all other Parliaments have done and let it go. It does not matter if we are left or right; we can write a common sense bill. We can look at it, think about it and then think of our children.

I doubt seriously if there is one of the 295 members in the House who could stand and say: "It really does not apply to me because drugs have never had an effect on my life". If we look at grandchildren, nephews, nieces, friends and families all around us we will find somebody. I guarantee it. That is how widespread it is. Yet we are making it better and better for those who want to

sell, traffic or make a living in bringing these drugs into our country.

I hope the words I have said today do not fall upon deaf ears. I can guarantee that most of the ridings I visited prior to the election and after are worried about the economy, about the deficit, about the jobless, and about many other things. However right behind their first worry is their worry about the safety of their children and their grandchildren, their grandmothers and their grandfathers.

Only last week I appeared on a talk show in Calgary where it was suggested to me that crime was not nearly as bad as it used to be. However the very first phone call was from Catherine, 83 years of age, living in Calgary which really does not have a high rate of crime, violence or things of that nature. She said: "I live alone; I only have my cat. All I want for the rest of my days in this world is to have a little peace and security but I cannot even sleep at night because I am so afraid". She lives in a community where the seniors are totally afraid that any day somebody is going to break in, bash them over the head and steal what they have. Most of the time that is done to support some kind of drug addiction.

(1400)

In the rural community of Wild Rose, in the smaller communities police service is not available because they are quite far out. These are towns and communities of 200 or 300. I invite members to come and look at the bars on the doors and the windows of the businesses and homes. Behind the bars are law-abiding citizens. That is the only way they can protect their property in that part of the country.

I wonder where have we come to when law-abiding citizens are locked behind bars and the rest are out running around. It does not make sense to me and it is time that we did something about it.

For crying out loud, take a good look at Bill C-7. Do not brag about what a wonderful thing it is until you do so. If you cannot see what I have seen going through that, I suggest that you go to an eye doctor and have the doctor take a good look at your eyes because that piece of paper will not solve the problems that this country needs solved.

I encourage members to vote down this bill and then go back and get serious about addressing these problems. Be prepared to go out into the country and the communities and say to the people that you are going to draft some legislation that is going to stop protecting the criminal. We are going to put a stop to you being a potential victim because we are going to start concentrating on the criminal from another aspect. Instead of seeing what we can do to keep him safe and to make sure his rights are looked after, we are going to see what we can do about putting him away where he belongs so you as a law-abiding citizen can enjoy a little peace and security in your own land.

*Government Orders*

We can do it. Let us do it. But we are not going to do it with Bill C-7.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time you have given me today. This is serious. Some members may not want to take it so seriously. It is more fun to make noise on that side than it is to get serious, but they had better be serious because this is killing this country.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support the second reading of the controlled drugs and substances act.

This government recognizes the need for legislative reform to modernize and improve the drug abuse provisions currently contained in the Narcotic Control Act and parts III and IV of the Food and Drugs Act.

In fact some of the present legislation is over 30 years old and is ill suited to deal with law enforcement requirements arising from the dangerous and complex Canadian drug scene of the 1990s. As the Minister of Health has already pointed out, drugs have a devastating impact on our society, particularly our youth.

The health minister has described to this House why this bill is important and how it will help safeguard the health of Canadians.

It is true that drug use has slightly diminished in recent years but that has been countered by the increasing potency of drugs, the new and dangerous ways in which drugs are injected and increasing use of different drugs in lethal combinations.

New emerging trends in drug abuse include hydroponic cultivation of potent strains of marijuana, the clandestine manufacture of designer drugs such as PCP imitations and the sale to children and teenagers alike of so-called look alike drugs.

[*Translation*]

Obviously, this legislation, which was passed 30 years ago, can no longer keep up with new drug trends today. The new bill will make Canadian drug control legislation meet the needs of the 21st century.

(1405)

[*English*]

The Minister of Health has already made clear the important health dimensions of this bill. As Solicitor General I want to discuss the equally important aspects of the law enforcement dimensions of the proposed legislation.

The increasing complexity of the drug scene has been matched by the increasing sophistication of drug traffickers and their ability to evade conventional police methods of fighting drug trafficking.

In the past the courts have repeatedly recognized that ordinary police methods are often ineffective in investigating drug offences. They have suggested on more than one occasion that legislation needs to be passed that would expressly authorize our police forces to carry out effective undercover operations against drug traffickers.

[*Translation*]

The controlled drugs and substances act which we are presenting will meet this need and give police the statutory instruments needed to fight drug traffickers in a way that complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

This bill will also help us fulfil our international obligations related to the suppression of drug trafficking. In 1990 for example the United Nations convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances came into force in Canada. This international agreement is currently in force in over 70 countries. It provides for co-operation between nations and is aimed at suppressing the illicit traffic in various psychoactive drugs and the chemicals used in their clandestine manufacture.

This convention also calls for the use of specialized investigative techniques which are often necessary to infiltrate sophisticated trafficking operations and to identify and bring to justice the ring leaders and their helpers.

Techniques such as "reverse sting" or "sell bust" operations have been used by police forces in other countries to excellent effect in the fight against sophisticated drug trafficking organizations. During this type of sting operation it is frequently necessary for the police to sell small quantities of drugs to the traffickers to establish credibility and further the investigation.

Until now, however, such an operation in Canada has had no basis in legislation and has therefore been open to legal challenge. The new bill will confirm that the police have the statutory foundation they need to carry out such operations. This bill will also allow Canada to fulfil its obligations under two other international conventions: a single convention on narcotic drugs and the convention on psychotropic substances. The bill will do this using a four point approach.

First, it will provide for controls on the import, export, production and distribution of psychoactive substances while at the same time allowing for the use of the substances for medical, scientific and industrial purposes.

Second, it will provide a control on the import and export of precursors, which are chemical substances used to produce controlled substances.

Third, it will enhance enforcement measures available to all police services, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and provincial and municipal police forces to suppress unlawful import, export, production and distribution of psychoactive substances.

(1410)

It will provide for the forfeiture of any property used to commit such offences. On the home front this bill will make it easier for the police to deal with those who produce illegal drugs.

Under the old legislation new drugs were not considered to be illegal until they were analysed and identified. Needless to say this process took time. This bill instead uses a broad description to define psychoactive drugs. In the future new drugs appearing on the street that fit this new generic description would automatically be covered by the bill. This would give the police the authority to arrest traffickers dealing in these new illicit drugs.

Last but by no means least, this bill will help us better protect our young people. I do not think anyone in this House would argue with the statement that our children represent our most precious resource and that we must do everything in our power to protect them.

Unfortunately one of the facts of modern life is that our young people are often the most vulnerable to the temptations of drug use. Drug traffickers know this and take full advantage of any opportunity to peddle their deadly products in places where young people congregate. Today's schools and even playgrounds are no longer safe from the attentions of drug traffickers.

To help protect children from this influence, the bill will introduce new criteria known as aggravating factors to assist judges in determining sentences for drug traffickers. Examples of these factors include dealing drugs in a school, near a school or to minors or involving minors in drug trafficking operations.

There are also other aggravating factors, such as previous drug convictions, possession of a weapon or the use of violence while engaged in drug trafficking. These are laid out in the bill.

Generally under these new provisions a convicted drug trafficker can expect to receive a stiffer sentence, particularly a jail term. Judges who do not impose a prison term in such circumstances will be required to give the reasons for their decision.

[Translation]

In conclusion, I believe that the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act will give Canadians the tool they need to better protect their health which is threatened by the harmful effects of drugs.

### *Government Orders*

From the Solicitor General's point of view, in terms of enforcement, this bill will give the police the power they need to organize more effective anti-drug operations, especially against major traffickers.

[English]

The proposed legislation will broaden the impact of existing proceeds of crime legislation which allows the police and the courts to strip the traffickers of the profits of their criminal enterprises. This bill will also enable the police to deliver a more forceful one-two punch to drug traffickers to severely curtail their deadly trade.

[Translation]

This is the kind of approach that the people, the courts and the police have rightly demanded to deal with this type of criminal justice problem and our government is committed to such an approach.

[English]

I ask members on all sides of the House to give early and full support to this bill.

I have listened to the concerns raised by opposition spokespersons about it. I believe those concerns should and will be addressed in committee when the bill is considered in detail following second reading. This is the place to go into the concerns that have been raised about the bill, its purposes, its approach and so on.

Therefore I urge hon. members to give early second reading to the bill to enable it to go quickly to committee so that all the points raised by opposition spokespersons and by other members in the House can be looked at and dealt with in the seriousness with which they were raised in the first place.

(1415)

I say this because I believe this bill will provide important additional tools to the enforcement community and the courts to fight the drug problem everywhere in this country.

Again, I ask this House to give this bill its early and full support.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod):** Mr. Speaker, one of the instructive things when one has been on the opposition side of the benches and one moves to the government side allows one to look back at how one referred to a bill when one was in opposition. I encourage the members opposite to do that.

I have taken the opportunity to go back into the committee hearings and look at comments made by the hon. member when he sat over here.

Is it appropriate, Mr. Speaker, for me to refer to one comment made by one member when that member was in the opposition?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I believe so.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Hill (MacLeod):** This comment was made on this bill when the hon. member was in opposition: "As I have told you, the subject has not been given any media attention at all. Yet I understand it was given first reading almost a year ago in June 1992. To rush through it within a couple of months will not speak well of Parliament, to say the least".

When the present government was in opposition a bill was introduced very quickly by the Conservatives, put into committee with a very similar undertaking, not well thought out in this House at all. As the committee comments will show, there were serious problems. I ask the government to listen very carefully in this House to the problems with this bill before it goes to committee.

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, we are not asking that the bill be dealt with without debate or without consideration of the concerns that have been raised or are yet to be raised. However, the format of consideration of legislation under the rules is such that the way to respond to these concerns is to do so in the course of committee proceedings and then through the report stage following committee proceedings.

There are a lot of points that have been raised which are quite technical which apply to individual clauses of the bill, for example, and I will not attempt to deal with them now. Second reading debate enables us to discuss these matters broadly but does not enable us to make the kinds of changes which may or may not be required in the light of parliamentary considerations.

That is why I am not saying that there should be no debate but that the best vehicle for examining in depth the kinds of concerns that have been raised and making changes, if they turn out to be changes that are necessary, is in the parliamentary committee. It will look at this bill in the next stage of debate.

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure almost a year ago of attending a conference on crime prevention and community safety. It was chaired by a member who is no longer with us, Mr. Horner, I believe.

I was very impressed when I went to the conference because it was an all-parliamentary committee that produced a unanimous report. The committee took the approach that crime prevention could be best handled through better enforcement as well as social development.

I bring that up because in this past campaign I tried not to play politics with the whole issue of crime, justice and law enforcement. What impressed me was that there was all-parliamentary agreement. Every member of each political party had the same position in the committee when the report was finally put in place.

(1420)

I would really hope that approach will continue with this bill. The reason I say that is that the problem of crime is a complex one which the committee report stated very ably.

If we as a country, not just political parties, are going to be able to deal with the issues of crime we cannot look for simplistic solutions. We have to understand the complexity of it. It behoves us all to try to give it the serious consideration it deserves.

If one looks at models in different communities or different countries, when Canada is compared to the United States of America, we are an incredibly good model. Our communities are a lot safer, there is a lot less crime, we have fewer people in prison and we do not execute people. We have a much safer community than they have in the United States of America.

We have to look at the issues as to why that is. It is important that as much as possible we take the politics out of it. Partisan politics are dealing with issues that have such an impact on our nation and our communities. We have to work together to solve the problem.

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Waterloo has made some very important comments. They reflect his own professional experience working with young people who have had difficulties. I am glad to see him here in this House to provide us with the benefit of not only his experience but also his wisdom.

I look forward to this House approaching these kinds of matters with the same type of constructive and non-partisan approach which reflected the report about which the hon. member spoke and which was published in the last Parliament.

We are dealing with serious matters involving the fabric of our communities. We are dealing with serious matters involving our young people and their future. They are very complex. Certainly no one piece of legislation, whether it is this piece of legislation before us or any piece of legislation, can deal with all the complexities by itself.

Certainly we need to make a serious effort toward crime prevention. That is why this government is working to bring forward a national crime prevention council. Certainly we need measures of rehabilitation. That is why this government is moving to bring forward amendments to the corrections and conditional relief act.

There is also a place for enforcement unfortunately but it has to be addressed and recognized. That is why we are bringing this legislation forward. It is to deal with the enforcement aspect of a very serious part of the concern for the breakdown of law and order in this country, that is traffic in drugs.

I ask the House to approach this and similar legislation on the basis of the very good advice given us by the hon. member for Waterloo. I hope in considering this matter they will recognize

that this piece of legislation is a serious and well intentioned attempt to deal with not all aspects but one aspect and an important one of the very serious problem linked with traffic in drugs.

It is in that context that I invite the House to consider it, to debate it, and to give it relatively prompt second reading so that in committee we can approach it in the spirit urged on us by the hon. member for Waterloo and as a result, come out with the best possible legislation to address a very serious concern.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley):** Mr. Speaker, my concern is precisely the importance of this bill and its emphasis on the justice system that we have heard so many people talk about this afternoon.

It is a very serious area of concern. It confuses me why this bill would be passed on to the health committee to be looked at rather than the justice committee. I and many others would feel more comfortable if this were going before the justice committee to look at those issues that have serious consequences long term rather than it being referred to the health committee.

Perhaps if there was some change in that, more of us would feel more comfortable.

(1425)

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, the very same thought has crossed my mind. I intend, after consultation with the Minister of Health, to see if there would be some disposition in the House to amend the motion for second reading to have this bill referred to the justice committee.

Looking over the bill in preparation for taking part in the debate, frankly the very same thoughts went through my mind as were expressed by the hon. member. If we present a motion to amend the motion for second reading to have the justice committee consider this matter, I hope we will have the support of the hon. member and others for the reasons she has mentioned.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I would like to make a suggestion to the House. The minister began his intervention at two o'clock. Under the Standing Orders—we are presently under Standing Order 74—he would have had 20 minutes to speak and 10 minutes for questions and comments for a total of 30 minutes. This will bring us to the magical hour of 2.30 which is the agreed upon hour to terminate today's sitting.

The minister spoke for 15 minutes. If I could be allowed to be so creative we could extend the question and comments by five minutes, which will still represent the 30-minute allotment that is allowed the minister on a subject of such great interest, as I see many people still seeking the floor. In the five minutes left I will recognize both the member for Wild Rose and the member for Portneuf, recognizing that both these members have already spoken, that the preamble will be short and the questions succinct, to allow the minister to respond before 2.30.

### *Government Orders*

I will begin by recognizing the member for Wild Rose, if the House agrees.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from B.C. took care of the question I had. I will pass to the next person.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In fairness, would there be anyone else from the Reform Party who would care to take the time. The member for Macleod, with the same consideration.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod):** Mr. Speaker, the comment made that we could have the justice committee involved in this bill certainly satisfies a lot of my concerns. However, the medical community needs to be represented as well. So it looks to me as if the committee might well need to have joint responsibility.

Could the minister comment please?

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I will have to see what we can do under the rules. But I would remind my hon. friend that under the rules any member can attend any committee, even a committee in which that member is not a regular participant, and take part in the discussions. In fact, a committee like the justice committee—if that is the way it turns out—could and would have to have the Minister of Health and her officials appear.

If it turned out that the justice committee would be the best overall vehicle, this would not exclude consideration of the health aspects or prevent members who are more interested in the health aspect from participating. That is my understanding of the rules.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, so that the Solicitor General can understand the context of my comment, I can tell him that my question deals with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Bill C-7 criminalizes dealing in controlled drugs, as well as import and export of those drugs. This is already in the present Act, and we have no problems with that. The bill also criminalizes possession of property obtained as a result of certain offences, but this is also in section 19 of the current legislation, so I see no problem here either. But perhaps you could tell me whether or not you anticipate any problems with respect to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We also know that concerning the laundering of proceeds of certain offences, section 19 of the current legislation and clause 10 of the bill are pretty similar. Regarding search, seizure and detention, clause 12 is the equivalent of sections 11 and 12 of the Narcotic Control Act. As for the power of infiltration and making supervised sales, clause 54(2) of the new bill provides for things that were essentially covered already under section 18 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.

*Government Orders*

However, where there is a departure from all this, it is in the powers given to the inspector. And I will conclude my question here. We know that, on the one hand, there are administrative powers used by the inspector and, on the other hand, there are judicial powers—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member for Portneuf, but the minister will have very little time left to respond. The hon. member has had the opportunity to make an eloquent speech on this very important matter. Seeing that time is running out, if the Solicitor General could please respond.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I intend to read over carefully the meaty speech of the Bloc Québécois critic as it raised very complex and interesting issues.

I would like to respond briefly to his last comments. He feels that a certain section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act gives police sufficient powers to control sales, but based on court decisions and legal opinions from our counsels, it is not enough. That is why we came up with clause 54(2).

I may not be an expert in the field, but it seems to me that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act cannot give powers to other police forces, like the Sûreté du Québec or the OPP, the Ontario Provincial Police. That is why we need the amendments proposed in this bill.

I can assure you that I take great interest in preserving the freedoms guaranteed to Canadians from coast to coast under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, it is the duty of the Justice Department to let us know whether or not a bill meets constitutional requirements, including those set in the charter. Without their advice, no bill could be tabled in this House.

[English]

The interesting comments made by my hon. friend indicate why, although there is a place and a need for general debate, in my opinion we should get this bill into committee as quickly as possible so that we can deal in depth with the very interesting points the hon. member has made and so that we can give all possible explanations and assurances with respect to the charter of rights and freedoms and in general with respect to the foundation and need for this law.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I would like to conclude by thanking the minister and all members present for their co-operation.

It being 2.30 p.m. this House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2.30 p.m.)

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